



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

## ***ANNUAL QUALITY REPORT 2016/17***

**NIPEC aims to improve standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives to facilitate their delivery of safe, effective and person-centred practice.**



<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Foreword by NIPEC’s Chair and Chief Executive</b>	1
<b>Introduction</b>	2
<b>Transforming the Culture</b>	4
▪ Our Vision and Values	4
▪ Maintaining Quality within Governance Arrangements	5
▪ Valuing Staff	8
▪ Communication	10
<b>Strengthening the Workforce</b>	15
▪ Nursing and Midwifery Workforce	16
▪ NIPEC’s Workforce	22
○ Effective Communication with Staff	23
○ Staff Health and Wellbeing	24
<b>Measuring the Improvement</b>	27
▪ Gathering Information and Examining Data	27
▪ Measuring Progress and Improving Performance	30
<b>Raising the Standards</b>	32
▪ Stakeholder Involvement	32
▪ Personal and Public Involvement	33
▪ Standardising Care and Ensuring Person-Centredness	34
<b>Integrating the Care</b>	36
▪ Engagement with Stakeholders	36
▪ Shared Opportunities for Learning and Development	40
<b>Conclusion</b>	43
<b>References</b>	44
<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1: NIPEC’s Governance Framework	45
Appendix 2: NIPEC’s Organisational Chart	52

## Foreword

Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) for Nursing and Midwifery was established in 2002 under the Health and Personal Social Services Act Northern Ireland (2002) as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored by the Department of Health (DoH). As an organisation we have a statutory responsibility to promote:

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

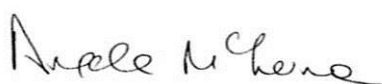
And provide:

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

NIPEC is focused on enabling the nursing and midwifery professions to provide safe and effective care of the highest quality. This is possible through the strategic relationships which have been developed with professionals across all levels of health care service provision. NIPEC values these relationships and seeks opportunities to engage in new partnerships to achieve its aims.

Quality 2020 underpins NIPEC activity and provides both a road map and a vision for the organisation to enable it to achieve its quality objectives. As in previous years we have much to celebrate and welcome the opportunity of this annual report to showcase the quality ethos that permeates our work. This could not be achieved without the enthusiasm and support of our Council members, staff, partners and stakeholders and we look forward to their continued support in the year ahead. We especially acknowledge the contribution that nurses and midwives make to our work and are thankful for their commitment and contribution. However, we are not complacent and recognise that we must continue to maintain and strengthen our relationships in order to facilitate person-centred care of the highest quality. As an organisation we are committed to achieving this.

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



---

Angela McLernon OBE  
NIPEC Chief Executive



---

Professor Carol Curran OBE  
NIPEC Chair

## Introduction

NIPEC, as a NDPB, is enabled to bring stakeholders together with impartiality to take forward its work in support of safe and effective care. A key strength of NIPEC is its ability to work in partnership with a broad range of stakeholders to create high quality innovative solutions which support employers, nurses and midwives, enhance professional practice and, in turn, facilitate the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care.

As a modern outward facing organisation, NIPEC is acutely aware of the multi-professional nature of contemporary service models and provision within which nurses and midwives work. Consequently, NIPEC is committed to effective, positive partnership working and to establishing, forming and maintaining collaborations and strategic alliances with a wide range of stakeholders from various sectors in order 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, 2015).

NIPEC also plays a particular role in supporting the vision and objectives of the DoH's 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:

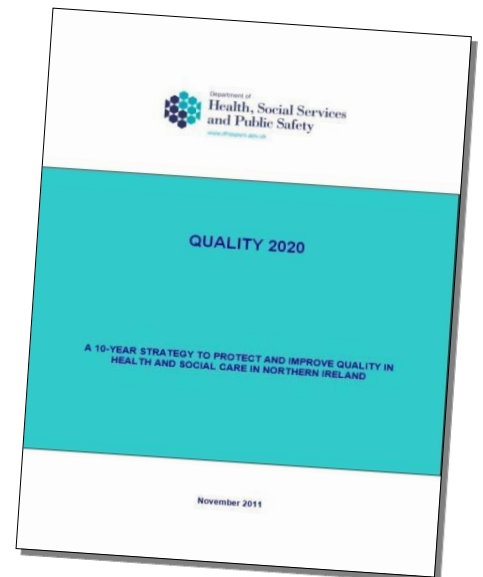
- Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and Registrants
- Department of Health (DoH)
- HSC Trusts
- HSC Safety Forum
- Health and Social Care Board (HSCB)
- Public Health Agency (PHA)
- Patient Client Council (PCC)
- Education provider organisations
- Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA)
- Royal Colleges of Nursing (RCN) and Midwives (RCM)

- Trade Union organisations
- Independent and Voluntary Sector

In line with the *Quality 2020* principles, NIPEC agrees that quality is everyone's business and is a part of everyday business. Whilst health and social care services continue to be delivered to the highest standards across a system which is supported by highly skilled and motivated staff, there is no room for complacency within a financially constrained system which delivers care against a context of increasing pressures and challenges.

This Annual Quality Report sets out what NIPEC achieved during 2016-17 to improve its services under each of the five strategic goals outlined in *Quality 2020*:

- Transforming the culture
- Strengthening the workforce
- Measuring the improvement
- Raising the standards
- Integrating the care.



## Transforming the Culture

***“We will make achieving high quality 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 (DoH 2011a).”***

### *Our Vision and Values*

NIPEC’s vision and values ensure that the quality of the services we provide are of the highest quality and support an open, honest and transparent and client focussed culture.

#### **Our Vision**

NIPEC will continue to act as a ‘beacon’ for the on-going development of the nursing and midwifery professions in Northern Ireland.

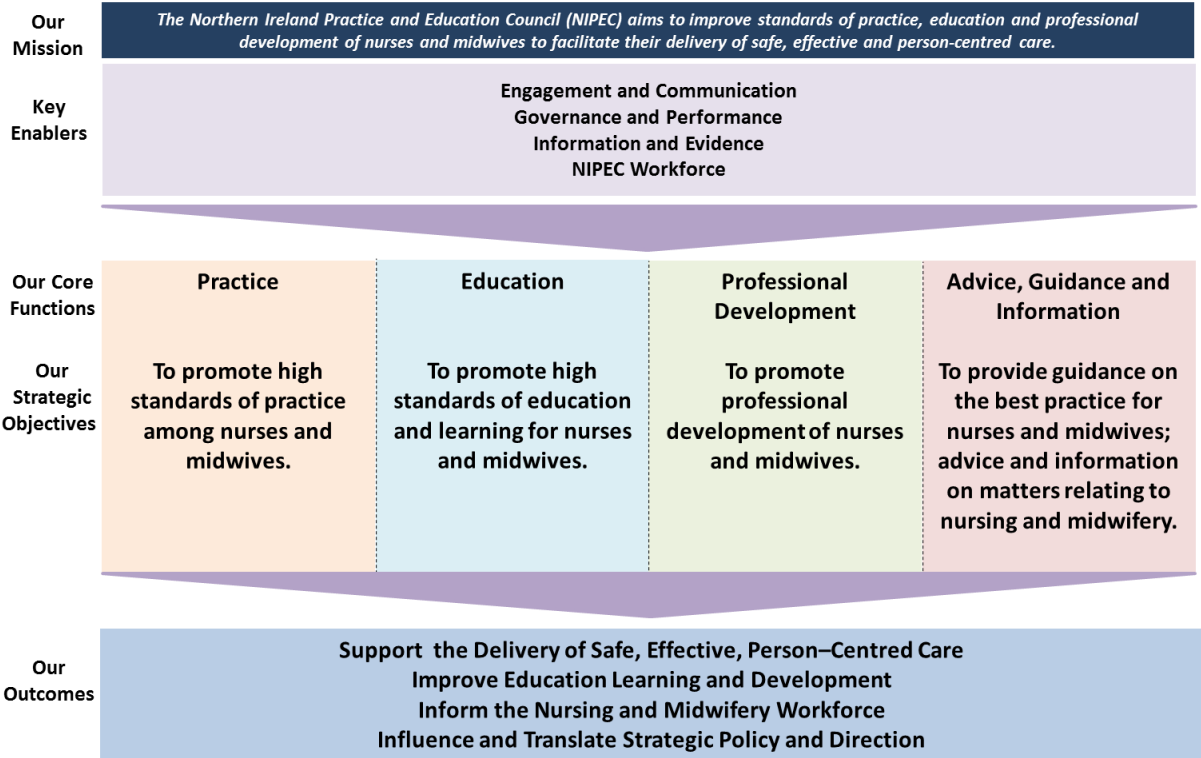
#### **Our Values**

- be transparent, open and impartial, acting with integrity and objectivity in the delivery of the responsibilities of NIPEC
- provide leadership that will have a positive impact on the professions
- be accessible and work collaboratively with individuals and interested organisations
- be accountable to the DoH, public, stakeholders and staff for the activities of NIPEC, its stewardship of public funds and the extent to which key performance targets and objectives have been met
- be open-minded and innovative in our approach to our work
- promote a culture of equality and diversity
- maximise value for money through propriety and good stewardship of public funds ensuring the delivery of cost effective and efficient services within available resources, and with independent validation of performance achieved wherever possible.

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 and providing guidance, advice and information on best practice and matters relating to 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. This is demonstrated in NIPEC’s Strategy Map below:

NIPEC’s Strategy Map 2013 - 2017



**Maintaining Quality within Governance Arrangements**

NIPEC reports on the quality of its performance through Annual Reports, Annual Quality Reports, 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**

As an accountable organisation, robust governance structures and systems are in place (Appendix 1) overseen by the NIPEC Council (‘The Council’). These underpin the roles, responsibilities and functions of NIPEC, including an internal audit plan.

The quality of services is embedded within NIPEC's governance arrangements which ensure that the contribution of the organisation fits strategically and operationally in support of effective and quality care delivery across the HSC. This is reflected in the Corporate and Business plans of the organisation. In support of this approach, quality is a standing item on the agenda of Council meetings, Business Team and Professional Team meetings.

NIPEC Council directs the development and delivery of the Annual Business Plan by regularly monitoring performance against strategic objectives and, on an annual basis 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. The Council meets each quarter and as part of its role to monitor 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 organisation is coproduced on a partnership basis and uses every opportunity to share and seek feedback on the work and performance of the organisation. As part of the Council's annual governance cycle, the members participate in NIPEC's annual stakeholder workshop (see *Integrating the Care*) to review and quality assure organisational business objectives and plan for the next year's objectives.

The Council are regularly updated on all relevant operational issues and actively participate and advise on decisions regarding organisational developments in relation to broader strategic themes emerging from a range of sources. These include regulatory and legislative requirements such as those from the NMC and DoH along with the learning from Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) and other inspections and reviews. As such the Council, along with NIPECs staff and stakeholders, have the opportunity to influence policy and practice regionally and nationally by responding to consultations and outcomes of reviews and inspections.



During 2016-2017, NIPEC Council members and staff contribution to consultations included:

- Innovation Grant Scheme (DoH)
- Draft Diabetes Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan (DoH)
- Amendments to modernise Midwifery Regulation and Improve the Effectiveness and Efficiency of Fitness to Practise Processes (DoH; NMC)
- Protect Life 2: a draft Strategy for suicide prevention in the North of Ireland (Health Improvement Branch, DoH)
- Modernising Fitness to Practise – changes to Fitness to Practice rules 2004 (NMC)
- Developing voluntary standards for General Practice Nurse Education and Practice (QNI)
- Quality Healthcare Experience Framework (DoH, CNO office)
- H&SC Transformation – Consultation on Criteria for Reconfiguring Health & Social Care Services (DoH)
- Reform for Adult Care and Support – Call for Evidence (DoH)
- Consultation on Regulations to Introduce Restrictions on Smoking in Cars Carrying Children (DoH)
- Consultation on the Safeguarding Board for NI (SBNI) Regional Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for NI (DoE)
- Public Consultation on the draft Public Health Agency Corporate Plan 2017-2021 (PHA)

During 2016-2017, 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
- quality assuring its project work through robust evaluative processes.

NIPEC regularly shares information with the DoH through regular Sponsor Branch meetings. Information shared via these meetings is developed from and fed back to

the NIPEC Business Team and Professional Team meetings ensuring that there is continual updating of NIPEC policy and practice.

In accordance with NIPEC's Records Management policies and procedures and the principles outlined in Records Management: Good Management Good Records (DHSSPSNI, 2011b), a system is in place to ensure effective and efficient storage and retrieval of records, documents and resources. Following a review of its information governance systems, policies and procedures in 2015-2016, in April 2016, NIPEC published its Information Governance Strategy with an action plan to support its implementation. This is overseen by NIPEC's Information Governance Group and the following action has been taken during the year:

- A review of existing and development of new policies and procedures to support information governance and records management
- Review of staff training to ensure compliance with Information Governance Controls Assurance Standard
- Completion of a self-assessment tool by staff, the results of which will inform identification of additional training needs.
- A phased approach to introducing a paper-lite system was agreed and a number of steps will be put in place during 2017-2018 to progress this.

### ***Valuing Staff***

NIPEC highly values its main resource - our Staff - with whom we regularly engage and communicate. As a person-centred organisation, NIPEC is guided by a set of values that directly impact on what it does and how it does it. Team working and the promotion of a positive culture, in order to develop and maximise the contribution of the workforce, is central to the delivery of our corporate objectives. The Senior Management Team is committed to ensuring that any negative behaviours or attitudes are unacceptable within the organisation and this is ensured via the current governance arrangements.

In 2016-2017 NIPEC completed all of the appropriate recommendations from the Regional HSC Whistleblowing Review. In particular a Council member was appointed by the NIPEC Council in November 2016 to champion whistleblowing within the organisation. The member and NIPEC's Head of Corporate Services and the Corporate Services Manager are planning to attend the HSC regional training organised by the Public Concern at Work (PCaW) charity, on behalf of the DoH, in 2017. NIPEC staff at all levels are now increasingly aware of whistleblowing. To evidence this, in a staff survey completed in October 2016 as part of the Regional HSC Whistleblowing Task and Finish Group: 100% of staff were aware of the organisation's policy and process for raising concerns about negligence or wrong doing; 80% of staff were confident they would speak up and raise concerns if they had cause to do so; 88% of staff were confident the organisation would appropriately

handle the investigation of any concerns raised; 100% of staff were aware of the organisations whistleblowing policy; 100% of staff understand their responsibility under that whistleblowing process. These figures are higher than the regional average figures demonstrating the organisations effectiveness at ensuring all staff understand that negative behaviours or attitudes are unacceptable within the organisation.

To ensure that quality permeates the culture of the workforce several initiatives were introduced in 2016-2017:

- Moving Forward Group
- Staff Health and Well-being committee initiatives
- Team 'Huddles': these are held fortnightly, last about 10-15 minutes and are led by both corporate and professional staff. They provide staff with an opportunity to brief colleagues on forthcoming events, potential work pressures, annual leave etc. They have proved useful in bringing staff together, albeit it briefly, for a 'catch up' on their work. Staff attitude towards the huddles will be evaluated in 2017-2018.
- HSCNI Staff Survey: a small working group involving corporate and professional staff was established to look at a number of recommendations arising from NIPEC's organisational report. All the recommendations and action points agreed at the staff meeting held in September 2016 have now been taken forward and completed.

Developing and modelling teamwork is facilitated using a bottom-up and top-down approach. NIPEC's Senior Management Team, which comprises five Senior Professional Officers (SPOs) and the Head of Corporate Services, supports the Chief Executive in the operational aspects of its business. Effective communication is maintained via professional and staff team meetings and staff are given the opportunity to contribute to the agenda for these meetings.

Staff are involved in a number of working groups on a regular basis (e.g. health and safety; health and social wellbeing) and on an ad-hoc basis (e.g. conference planning). A range of policies and mechanisms are in place to support and encourage staff to be involved in decision making, problem solving and innovation. including: NIPEC's 'Working Well Together' Policy and 'Capability/Competence' Procedure; a range of HR 'family friendly' policies; a suggestion box; our internal meeting structure (Business Team, Corporate Services Management Team, Professional Team, Admin meetings, staff meetings; 1:1 appraisal and development meetings); line management structure. In addition, the Joint Negotiation and Consultative Committee (JNCC) continued to meet on a regular basis during 2016-2017 and 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.

A safe environment for raising concerns is also provided to enable listening and response, addressing problems and challenges when improvement is recommended.

## **Communication**

NIPEC utilises a range of resources to ensure effective communication with key stakeholders including on-line, written, electronic and face-to-face communication.

### *NIPEC Website*

The website facility consists of the main website <http://www.nipec.hscni.net> the career pathway microsites and online portfolio website <https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net> We apply robust mechanisms to ensure that our website is an effective and easily accessible resource for nurses and midwives supporting them in their practice, education and professional development. NIPEC's Website Governance Team meets monthly to review the website and ensure its information is current, accessible, and effective at reaching stakeholders. Workshops are also regularly held to gather feedback on resources which are developed by NIPEC.

During 2016-2017 the NIPEC website information team kept the website updated by:

- Developing further microsites to promote resources.
- Transforming NIPEC's main website to enable visitors to navigate the site with ease.
- Regularly posting latest news about NIPEC resources and events
- Using google analytics to collect data to understand visits to the websites
- Using software to remove broken links: work is underway to update the software and is anticipated to be completed in 2017. We will then be able to request this to be carried out on a monthly/quarterly basis.

Due to reconfiguration of the NIPEC web based resources and websites a new baseline will need to be established in order to effectively track activity and evaluate use of these resources.

The main NIPEC website received 71,310 hits and 10,656 visitors<sup>1</sup> with an average time of 4:33 minutes per session (June 2016 to March 2017<sup>2</sup>). 10,656 visitors from 92 countries have visited the NIPEC Website in 2016-2017 including the US, Philippines, Canada, Turkey, Iceland, Zimbabwe. Of this figure, 65% were new visitors and 35 % were returning visitors.

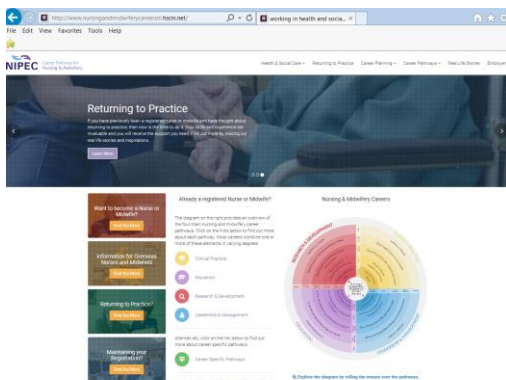
---

<sup>1</sup> unique visitors are the number of individuals accessing the site

<sup>2</sup> figures are not available for the months April – June/July 2016 because of a data transfer issue when setting up the new website.

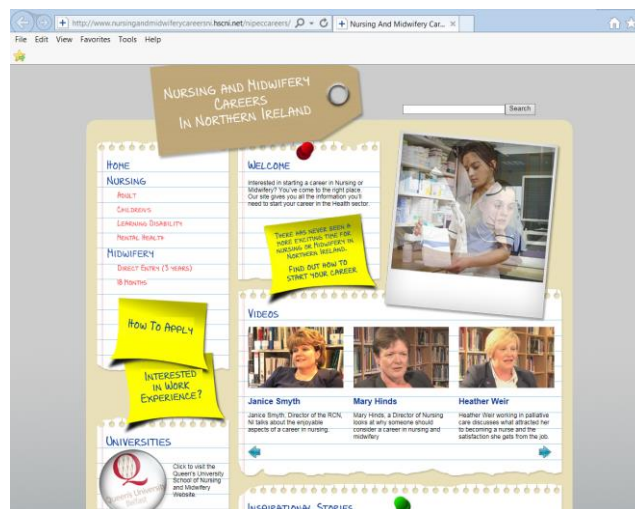
## Career Pathway Website

The Career Pathway website received 13,028 hits and 4,787 visitors<sup>1</sup> with an average time of 1.48 minutes per session (July 2016 to March 2017<sup>2</sup>).



The Regional Career Pathway for Nursing and Midwifery, <http://www.nursingandmidwiferycareersni.hscni.net/> is also accessible through the main website.

The site has been updated in 2016 to include the Emergency Care Nursing Career Pathway. In development we also have the Senior Nurse Out of Hours, Midwifery and Older People's Nursing Career Pathways. The Career Pathway Website Governance Group, chaired by one of the HSC Executive Directors of Nursing meets bi-annually to quality assure the website and approve the addition of career specific pathways to the site. The site can also be accessed by those contemplating nursing or midwifery as a career: <http://www.nursingandmidwiferycareersni.hscni.net/nipeccareers/index.html>



## Online Portfolio Website

NIPEC's online portfolio supports both nurses and midwives to maintain their records for each revalidation period and it continues to be enhanced to ensure it meets their needs.

The portfolio enables registrants to:

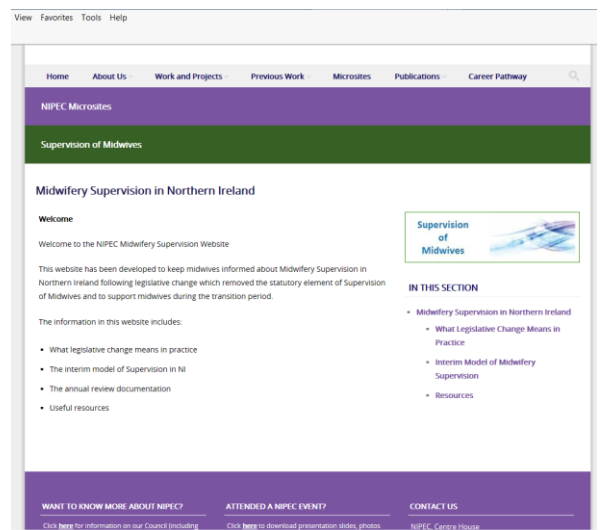
- Record their practice hours
- Record and reflect on their CPD
- Record their feedback

- Reflect on their practice related feedback
- Download the NMC template with their information automatically inserted in the relevant sections
- Email relevant information to fulfil their revalidation requirements



The Online Portfolio website received 142,085 hits and 7,390 visitors<sup>1</sup> (with an average time of 14.53 minutes per session (April 2016 – March 2017). The number registered on the online portfolio rose from 14,221 in April 2016 to 14,521 in March 2017 - an increase of 300 registrants.

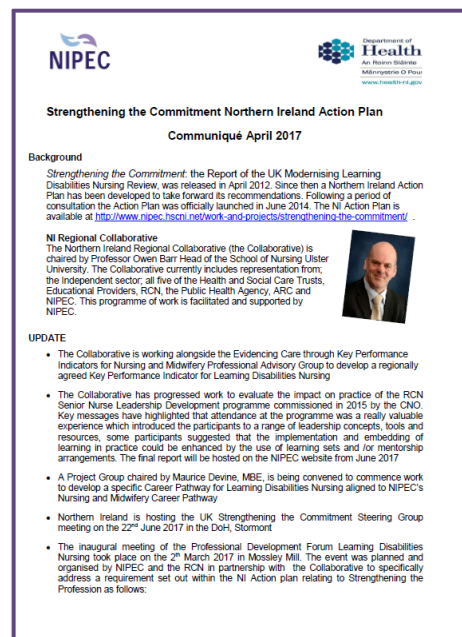
The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section is updated with any queries raised by registrants and individual registrants receive a personal response. The Midwifery Supervision record has also been further refined and NIPEC has also aligned the information on Midwifery Supervision with NMC Revalidation and the NIPEC microsite on Midwifery Supervision is being updated to reflect these changes so that midwives are fully cognisant of the relationship between supervision and revalidation.



The NMC gave permission for NIPEC to add the NMC forms for revalidation to the online portfolio. Once the information is entered into the registrant's portfolio the information is automatically populated into the relevant NMC template and this has been a popular feature of the website.

### Communiqués

These are used to promote awareness of NIPEC to the wider HSC, independent and voluntary workforce which includes independent hospitals, hospice and nursing homes and service users.





## NIPEC Conference News

This is an electronic publication separately issued following each conference.

## SCAN (Senior nurse/midwife Current Awareness from NIPEC)

This highlights current topical health and healthcare issues, key publications and events, under the broad headings of governance, leadership, workforce, education/development and patient experience. NIPEC also uses the front section of this monthly publication to highlight NIPEC news including: events, reports, resources and projects. SCAN is issued for wider circulation via email through 199 Senior Nurses and Midwives in the statutory and independent sectors including HSC Trusts, PHA, DoH, Independent Hospitals, Hospices and Nursing Homes, as well as Education Providers and Staff Side organisations. It is also published on NIPEC's website and promoted through NIPEC's social media. NIPEC continues to add to the circulation list of SCAN in response to requests through its enquiry line.



## Social Media

NIPEC is seeking to increase its social media presence and made good use of twitter at the NIPEC conference by “tweeting” photographs and quotes from the speakers.

(Figures below relate to the NIPEC Conference)

Number of Posts	Total number of 'Likes' from posts	Total number of 'retweets' of posts	Number of people 'mentions' of NIPEC	Number of new followers	Number of people 'Reached/ Impressions'
19	60	72	29	35	12,300

## *Survey Management*

During 2016-2017 NIPEC has continued to use survey management technology via its website to gather information relating to various projects being taken forward. This included:

### *External*

- Impact measurement of R-CAT (NIPEC 2012 revised) nurses in April 2016
- Recording Care Project Children's Survey in May 2016
- Recording Care Project Adults Survey May 2016
- Nursing and Midwifery Strategy for Northern Ireland in June 2016
- Professional Event Feedback Template in June 2016
- Survey of NIPEC Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum members in September 2016: conducted to review its purpose, membership and how often it should meet.
- Leading Care Resources follow up project

### *Internal*

- Audit of Electronic Filing Procedures in January 2017
- Staff Health and Wellbeing survey in March/April 2017 to seek feedback from staff on the work of the committee and the activities carried out to-date.

The number of survey monkey respondents is constantly reviewed to secure a optimum approach for conducting surveys and the effectiveness of this approach.



## Strengthening the Workforce

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

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

*“...must keep (their) knowledge and skills up to date, taking part in appropriate and regular learning and professional development activities that aim to maintain and develop (their) competence and improve (their) performance” (NMC, 2015).*

Key to this is the need for strong and visible leadership at all levels to ensure that innovation and change are supported by informed practitioners and that when things go wrong, registrants can identify and articulate the issues to effect the right change at the right time on every occasion. As such NIPEC has a unique role to develop resources and tools that support staff at all levels within the HSC to identify where improvements can be made and new methodologies introduced to support and take forward transformational change, including addressing and, where appropriate, escalating concerns. NIPEC has a culture of being at the forefront of innovation and change within the nursing and midwifery professions and welcomes effective leadership to integrate quality into nursing and midwifery care in Northern Ireland. This is demonstrated by the inclusion of quality as a standing agenda item at Council, Senior Management Team and Professional Team meetings.

During 2016-2017, NIPEC led and supported the translation of policy into nursing and midwifery practice with work streams aligned to regional strategies such as the Northern Ireland Maternity Strategy. Furthermore, SPOs were included in the membership of project groups to facilitate implementation and professional and regulatory developments such as Revalidation (NMC) and Nursing and Midwifery Supervision.

Within the organisation NIPEC recognises that listening to staff and encouraging them to be involved in decision making, problem solving and innovation is a key component of strengthening the workforce.



## *Nursing and Midwifery Workforce*

Changes and challenges continue to have an impact on the nursing and midwifery workforce in Northern Ireland including: changing population demographics; an increase in public health roles; working within integrated teams; changes in models of service delivery from predominantly acute to primary and community based care; enhancing multi-disciplinary and multi-agency working; a revised NMC Code; further development and introduction of Advanced and Specialist Practice Nursing roles such as Primary Care and Emergency Care; changing European and local political landscape. NIPEC continues to play a particular role in supporting the vision and objectives of the DoH Chief Nursing Officer in the continued pursuit of excellence in the delivery of nursing and midwifery services to the population of Northern Ireland.

During 2016-2017, NIPEC continued to play an important role and lead work in collaboration with key leaders to support a flexible approach to the learning and development of nurses and midwives. Part of this was the co-production of resources, to enable registrants to enhance their competence and performance to improve the quality of care they provide to their patients and clients. Examples of completed and developing programmes of work include:

- *A Career Pathway for Nursing and Midwifery in Northern Ireland* (Page 11)
- *A Supervision Framework for Nursing and Midwifery* (Page 38)
- *Professionalism*: NIPEC continued to lead on a national project on behalf of the CNO for Northern Ireland to enable professionalism in nursing and midwifery practice. Work was progressed in 2016-2017 when a statement of intent and rationale for the work was completed. The final framework was agreed in March 2017 which informed the production of appropriate resources to assist professionals to achieve the requisites of the NMC Code (2015) supporting the delivery of safe, effective person-centred care. The resulting framework will enable registrants to reflect on their individual contribution and professionalism as nurses or midwives in the area of practice within which they work.
- *Safeguarding Adults Competency Framework*: During 2016-2017 NIPEC led work to explore the need to develop a safeguarding adults competency framework for nurses and midwives. A successful workshop in June 2016 led to the initiation of a project in October 2016. The aim of the project is to develop a competency framework for all nurses and midwives that will reflect the skills and knowledge required to safeguard adults and hence contribute to the quality of care that is provided.
- *Leadership Updates*: NIPEC officers work closely with registrant staff in HSC organisations providing professional updates and raising awareness on issues which have the potential to impact on professional practice and ultimately safe and effective person-centred care. Updates are also provided to DoH and at

HSC Trust Nursing Executive meetings and to other organisations such as the RQIA.

- *Enhancement of NIPEC's e-resources*: the competence assessment tools outlined in Table 1 have been amended from previous years to take account of regional changes and on-going work. They 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. Our competence assessment tools continue to be popular for registrants outside NI. We have had requests from England, Republic of Ireland, Isle of Man, and Saudia Arabia in 2016/2017 to adopt and or adapt our competence assessment tools and other resources in relation to: ward sister/charge nurse/ team leader competence assessment tool, generic competence assessment tool, Respiratory Competence Assessment Tool (R-CAT) and preceptorship framework:

Table 1: Competence Assessment Tools

NIPEC's e-resources:	Available at:
Attributes Framework	<a href="https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/attributes/default.asp">https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/attributes/default.asp</a>
Respiratory (R-CAT)	<a href="https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/rCAT/Default.asp">https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/rCAT/Default.asp</a>
Promoting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people	<a href="https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/PMHWB/Default.asp">https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/PMHWB/Default.asp</a>
Competence Assessment Tool for Ward Sisters/Charge Nurses	<a href="https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/WSCN/Default.asp">https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/WSCN/Default.asp</a>
Competence Assessment Tool for Team Leaders	<a href="https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/team/Default.asp">https://nipecportfolio.hscni.net/compro/ReadOnly/team/Default.asp</a>

#### *European Union work*

- NIPEC along with a Nursing Officer in DoH contributed to EU work in 2016-2017 on the development of a European Common Competency Framework for Healthcare Assistants.
- During 2016-2017 NIPEC participated with a number of partners, including the DoH, to successfully bid for an international project to support nurses and midwives in Croatia. This project, worth 690,000 euros, will see nursing and

midwifery staff from Northern Ireland lending their expertise to develop mentorship programmes for pre-registration nurses and midwives, through the Department of Health in Croatia on behalf of the UK.

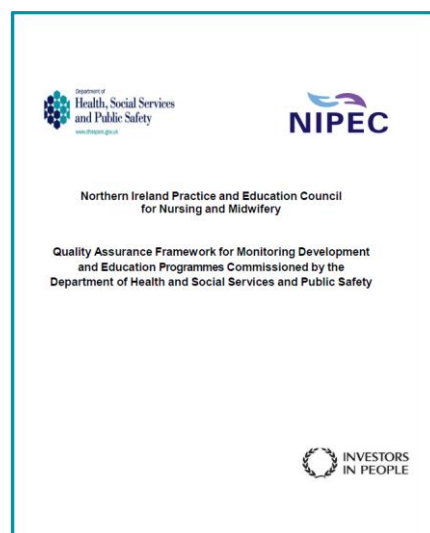
- NIPEC had several opportunities during 2016-2017 to engage with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland to profile the work of the organisation and in particular resources related to record keeping. This included sharing of experience which enabled discussion and peer review of the approaches used.
- NIPEC has continued to engage with colleagues in the Republic of Ireland and the four countries of the UK to determine learning in the field of nursing informatics and use of technology.

### *Improving Standards in Education and Development*

NIPEC promoted improved standards of education and development in collaboration with education and service providers and provided a range of activities and events relating to education, learning and development to facilitate and further develop the competence of nurses and midwives.

Each year the DoH commissions NIPEC to quality assure a sample of DoH funded education and learning programmes and activities. The monitoring is undertaken in accordance with a regionally agreed framework developed by NIPEC (NIPEC 2016). The criteria for Quality Assurance are presented as good practice statements, and address:

- the need for transparency of the provider's intentions
- links with improving patient and client care
- the requirements to make best use of partnership working
- value for money.



NIPEC benchmarks each activity for QA against good practice statements and make recommendations for improvement. Recommendations are followed up with the education provider at the following year of QA activity to establish how these have been progressed. NIPEC submits an annual report to the CNO, detailing key findings of the QA activity, highlighting any issues arising and a suggested action plan. This is an essential part of driving up the quality of education programmes and hence the standard of nursing and midwifery practice. Findings and themes were presented in the form of a report to the CNO. Programmes included in the QA monitoring during 2016-2017 are presented below:

Table 2: Programmes included in NIPEC's QA monitoring during 2016-2017

**Quality Assurance of Non-NMC Commissioned Activity  
DoH 2016-2017**

1	QUB	Principles of Critical Care in Midwifery: Recognition of deteriorating mother	Stand Alone Module
2	QUB	Working with people with dementia	Stand Alone Module
3	UU	Diabetes Care	Short Course
4	UU	Advanced Symptom management/symptom management in End of Life Care	Stand Alone Module
5	RCN	Improving patient safety: developing skills to enable delivery of safe, effective patient centred care	3 day programme
6	CEC	Recognition and management of the acutely ill patient	1 day
7	CEC	Palliative care Nursing	6 days

During 2016-2017, NIPEC delivered its responsibilities of promoting high standards of practice, education and the professional development of nurses and midwives to develop leadership knowledge and skills improve practice and introduce new ways of working. Examples include:

- The findings within the *Description of the Learning Disabilities nursing workforce in Northern Ireland* undertaken by NIPEC during 2015-16 has shaped and informed the work plan of the NI Collaborative during 2016-2017.
- Following the development of the *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework* (2014) in partnership with key stakeholders from HSC Trusts, Higher Education Institutions, Professional Bodies and including Advanced Nurse Practitioners, NIPEC was invited by the RCN to participate in UK wide work to take forward a process to credential Advanced Nursing Practice Programmes at Master's Level. The *Framework* can be viewed on the DoH website at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/advanced-nursing-practice-framework.pdf>

NIPEC also provides leadership to strengthen the workforce to transform services and influence change at all levels to enable the workforce to deal effectively with challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and to improve quality.

To achieve this, in 2016-2017 NIPEC was involved in the further development of the *Attributes Framework* (DHSSPS, 2014). This framework was developed by the HSC

Safety Forum and NIPEC in partnership with key stakeholders within Health and Social Care, including Medicine, Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health Professions, Social Work, and General Practice to support leadership for quality improvement and safety at all levels in Health and Social Care. The purpose of the *Framework* is 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 role or for future roles
- organisations to build the capability and capacity of the workforce to participate in, and lead, initiatives which develop quality care and services.



The implementation of the Attributes Framework was enhanced by the development of an eLearning programme for Level 1 of the framework: Strengthening Foundations ([www.hsclearning.com](http://www.hsclearning.com)) for all staff to access and NIPEC facilitated the Co-Chairs of the Attributes Implementation Task Group to coproduce the learning materials with all the relevant stakeholders which is also accessible in a format to support face-to-face delivery. Other organisations that do not have

access to the HSC eLearning platform are able to get a copy of the programme to host on their own website so that all staff and those in training can access this resource.

The Co-Chairs of Quality 2020 proposed to develop training for Level 1 of the Attributes Framework, to ensure that all staff working in HSC and those in training have Level 1 of the Framework.

In 2016-2017 work also commenced on the planning, design and content of Level 3 and Level 4 programmes for all staff (multi-professional and non-professional) responsible for driving and directing quality improvement in HSC. This is to ensure that all staff are developed to deliver the Ministers vision Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together (DoH 2016).

During 2016-2017, NIPEC contributed to the continuous professional development of nurses and midwives through engagement, teaching and presentation opportunities. For example:

- NIPEC presented overviews of its work and resources to Final year Nursing and Midwifery students across both HEIs
- NIPEC presented to participants undertaking Nursing Leadership Programmes delivered by the HSC Leadership Centre and Clinical Education Centre. During these programmes, NIPEC explains its role and function and also provided information on a range of its projects and resources

- NIPEC presented to over 180 final year student nurses on the improvement methods being utilised in Northern Ireland to improve nurse record keeping practice, including the new approach to care planning
- NIPEC regularly demonstrates its website, resources and online portfolio during organised events. This approach encourages participants to record and reflect on their continuous professional development, an NMC requirement for revalidation
- NIPEC engaged with nursing and midwifery colleagues working within the RQIA to support professional development through a range of meetings. At these meetings, NIPEC staff presented updates on projects, resources and professional issues for nursing and midwifery staff working in RQIA
- In partnership with the DoH, NIPEC hosted a round table discussion on Mental Health Nursing in November 2016 with Emeritus Professor Tony Butterworth (Hon). Chairman, Foundation of Nursing Studies, Vice Chair, RCN Foundation to support a discussion amongst senior nurses in Northern Ireland on mental health nursing and its place in delivering modern mental health services.



NIPEC also encouraged nurses and midwives to be involved in decision making, problem solving and innovation through a range of opportunities. Examples include:

- *Delegation*

NIPEC has led on the development of a regional decision support framework for delegation in nursing and midwifery practice. Three workshops have been held June 2016 – March 2017 to develop an outline resource to assist in the delegation of nursing and midwifery tasks and duties to support the provision of person-centred outcomes. Work continues to be progressed in this area.

- *Professional Guidance to Support Consultant Roles*

Consultant Nurses and Consultant Midwives have been part of a Steering Group led by one of the Executive Directors of Nursing and including senior nurses and midwives in HSC Trusts, Education providers, PHA and Professional Bodies to develop Professional Guidance to support Consultant roles in HSC Bodies.

## **NIPEC's Workforce**

NIPEC is a relatively small NDPB within the HSC family of organisations, providing effective and efficient service to its stakeholders. Our organisational chart is presented in Appendix 2. As a person-centred organisation, NIPEC is guided by a set of values that directly impact on what it does and how it does it. The contribution of the workforce is central to the delivery of NIPEC's corporate and business objectives and NIPEC staff are at the heart of what the organisation does. We seek to develop and model excellent teamwork via our ethos and our activities.

*“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.”*

Within the organisation there is an embedded system of staff development and performance reviews with individual roles, responsibilities and objectives discussed and included in annual personal development plans and reviews to ensure high quality outcomes. Through this process during 2016-2017 all staff were able to identify, with their line manager, their learning and development needs and learning opportunities enabling staff to keep up to date and avail of opportunities both internal and external to the organisation to support them to work effectively within the team.

Staff have also as part of their appraisal signed up to achieving Level 1 of the Attributes Framework e-learning programme. Nine members of staff (54%) completed this training in 2016-2017, and will be awarded their Level 1 red badge. This is an excellent resource for all staff including those who are not working on the front line but whose jobs impact albeit indirectly on patients and clients.

In addition, systems and processes exist to validate and monitor the NMC registration of NIPEC's professional Council members and NIPEC's professional staff and to support their mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) activities. NIPEC has reviewed and updated its Validation and Monitoring of Professional Regulation policy to reflect the new NMC revalidation requirements for nurses and midwives. This policy was shared with our Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum colleagues to help them with the development of their respective policies for their registrant employees.

During 2016-2017 NIPEC has continued to support the leadership and development of nurses through temporary and secondment opportunities. The Project Work that NIPEC initiates relies on HSC Trust staff enabling them to acquire and build leadership and strategic professional practice skills under the supervision and direction of senior professional staff. Examples during 2016-2017 include the employment of Professional Officers for the Recording Care and Professional Framework for Emergency Care projects.



In 2016-2017, NIPEC enhanced its capacity to support leadership in its projects through the employment of Associate Senior Professional Officers for the first time. This position has enabled senior HSC staff to lead projects for NIPEC to ensure the timely and effective progression of project work and to enable HSC staff to consolidate their leadership skills within the organisation. NIPEC also offered an opportunity to a graduate intern to develop skills in Health and Social Care organisations during 2016-2017 under the management and support of a Senior Professional Officer.

During 2016-2017 NIPEC supported one SPO to complete the Chief Executives' Forum Women's Leadership initiative programme 2016-2017. The initiative offers female senior managers working in NI public services a unique opportunity to develop their leadership potential and improve crucial networking skills. Additionally, one SPO successfully applied to undertake the Florence Nightingale Foundation General Leadership Scholarship, supported by NIPEC, and was awarded the Garfield Weston Scholarship – the only leadership scholarship awarded in Northern Ireland for 2017.

One SPO was supported to attend and present the Professional Framework for Emergency Care Nursing at the RCN 2016 Centenary Conference and the Global Emergency Care/Trauma Conference (Barcelona, September 2016). Poster presentations were presented at the 2016 RCN Centenary Conference for the Attributes Framework, Gateway to Nursing and Recording Care projects.

One of the Senior Professional Officers successfully completed the South Eastern HSC Trust's Safety Quality and Experience Programme, to enhance competence in Quality Improvement methodologies in particular the Model for Improvement. This involved working as a member of a team in the Trust to improve recognition and timely management of patients identified with sepsis through the implementation of the SEPSIS 6 bundle.

#### *Effective Communication with Staff*

Although NIPEC is a relatively small organisation whose workforce are based in one location, effective internal communication is still important in ensuring all staff are kept informed and involved in the business of NIPEC. Improved working relationships, morale and team working are all by-products of effective internal communication, and regular internal briefings, staff noticeboard and informal face to face updates which are all used to ensure staff are kept informed and up-to-date.

Staff are brought together frequently to share information, provide updates and seek feedback on issues affecting the organisation and celebrate achievements. Internal meetings that are held on a regular basis and which involve and inform staff at various levels include: Business Team, Professional Team, Corporate Services

Management Team, and Administration Team meetings. 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. This is also a valuable supervision opportunity for professional staff benefiting staff as well as the organisation.

In May 2016, as part of ensuring effective communication and to engage staff in a proposed new corporate services structure, a workshop with corporate and professional staff was facilitated by the HSC Leadership Centre. All staff had the opportunity to contribute to the outcomes of the day and a range of issues were discussed in relation to the direction of the organisation. As a result a Moving Forward committee was established and an Action Plan developed with actions across four areas, namely: communication, IT, the restructure itself and systems and processes. The action plan was implemented and signed off by staff in January 2017, with the agreement that any ongoing issues would be monitored by the Corporate Services Management Team.

*Staff Health and Wellbeing*

The health and wellbeing of staff is a high priority for NIPEC and a range of family friendly policies are in place to support staff in achieving a work life balance. The Health and Social Wellbeing Committee, established in 2015, continued in its objective of nurturing and improving staff relationships and supporting staff in accessing a range of activities aimed at improving their health and wellbeing. Supported by NIPEC senior management, the work of the committee highlights the commitment that NIPEC makes to valuing staff. The Committee comprises of members from both corporate and professional teams and their involvement is voluntary.

A programme of activities was developed based on staff feedback and views, and shared with NIPEC’s Business Team who agreed to support the group activities. Whilst staff are encouraged to attend and participate, their involvement is entirely voluntary. As such, an email is issued to all staff after each Committee meeting to ensure everyone is kept informed on the various activities and forthcoming events. In addition, the work of the committee and the various health and social wellbeing events are shared with a wider audience via a page on NIPEC’s website within the “About Us” section.



The Royal National Institute for the Blind RNIB was chosen as NIPEC’s nominated Charity for the year from a number of charities suggested by staff. Funds were raised through a coffee morning and raffle, a Wellbeing Wednesday soup lunch, and via the Sooty collection boxes placed around the organisation. The



total amount donated to RNIB was £300.

Activities and events organised throughout the year included:

- Shoebox Appeal
- Mental Health Awareness Session
- 10,000 Step Team Challenge
- Christmas Breakfast and Quiz
- 'Wellbeing Wednesday's'

At the end of the year, a survey was undertaken to seek feedback from staff on the work of the committee and the activities carried out to date. The response to the survey was a 78% return from the 19 participants, and a summary of the main outcomes are:

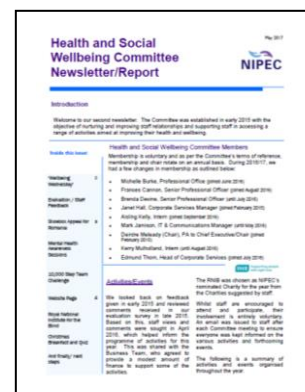
- 86% agreed that the committee had met its remit and objectives
- 92% stated that they felt that the programme of activities were varied enough to enjoy, staff had enough notice to participate and the activities were beneficial
- 60% indicated that they felt that the balance of activities was about right or adequate for the size of the organisation.

Overall the response from staff was very positive and the survey provided some useful thoughts and feedback which the committee will take on board when developing a programme of activities for 2017-2018.

Staff absence is managed through a supportive and proactive approach following agreed regional policies and procedures. Staff can avail of the HSC staff support service which is provided by Inspire - formerly known as Carecall. Staff were updated of the change in name and information on this service is available in staff communal areas. Staff were also made aware of the BSO occupational health facilities, mental health awareness training programme and the annual flu vaccination programme.

Enhancing the environment in which staff work is also valued within the organisation. A programme of work to refurbish the offices and communal area was commenced in January 2017. This will improve the environment in which staff work and increase a sense of wellbeing in the workplace.

The quality ethos that exists within the organisation and which is embedded in its staff is demonstrated by accreditation with Investors in People. Based on the Investors in People Feedback Report (March 2015) a work plan to address areas of development was further progressed in 2016-2017. NIPEC will be due to seek



reaccreditation in March 2018 and work to prepare for this will commence during 2017-2018.

NIPEC's Business Plan 2016-2017 identifies a number of people priorities including: the capability of managers to lead and engage teams to achieve the business plan objectives; and the development of a competent and valued workforce. The Team Effectiveness Event is an example of how NIPEC continues to involve staff in exploring and agreeing steps to achieving high performance and effective team working.

## 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” (DoH 2011a)***

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 informed by literature and designed and developed with stakeholders. NIPEC engages with stakeholders to review the previous year’s work and to identify the needs of nurses and midwives to inform the next annual business plan thus ensuring that the corporate objectives remain fit to meet the needs of practitioners. NIPEC’s performance is monitored by the DoH bi-annually, through Accountability Reviews.

### ***Gathering Information and Examining Data***

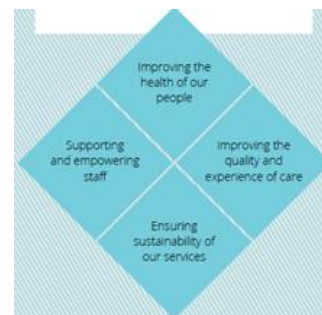
**NIPEC is committed to ensuring that all information held, produced, developed and disseminated by NIPEC is managed effectively and based on the best available evidence to support the delivery of the strategic and operational objectives. This is undertaken in partnership with a wide range of key stakeholders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

### ***Key performance indicators***

- ***Organisational:*** Quality is embedded in the organisation at corporate and professional level and is informed by Quality 2020 (DoH 2011a). Quality is maintained as a focus within governance arrangements via the use of key performance indicators (KPIs). NIPEC views KPIs both financial and non-financial, as an important component of the information needed to explain an organisation’s progress towards its organisational goals and assist in corporate transparency. KPIs have been selected which are relevant to NIPEC’s activity and using the 2016-2017 Business Plan activity is extracted, monitored and recorded within the KPI process as either a monthly or yearly figure. The KPIs which NIPEC report on are: data information, whistleblowing, financial, purchasing, human resources, controls assurance standards, 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.

Information was shared with NIPEC Council on a quarterly basis and during 2016-2017 through the Chief Executive reports 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.

- *Nursing and Midwifery*: NIPEC co-ordinates a Regional KPI Professional Advisory Group, in partnership with the PHA, chaired by the DoH Chief Nursing Officer. The purpose of the Group is to identify *KPIs for Nursing and Midwifery* to measure, evidence and monitor the impact and unique contribution of nursing and midwifery on the quality of patient and client care. The work of this Group is underpinned by the principles of *The Quadruple Aim* (DoH, 2016), based on improving the health of populations, enhancing the patient and client experience, while optimizing costs and empowering staff. During 2016/17, KPIs relating to pressure ulcers and falls continued to be monitored across all five HSC Trusts. Work to develop further KPIs relating to sickness absence, vacancies, use of bank and agency staff, supervision, appraisals, mandatory training and specialist areas of practice including safeguarding children, district nursing, health visiting and mental health nursing continued within the Regional Professional Advisory Group



During 2016-2017 NIPEC committed to exploring the use of Outcomes Based Accountability within its work streams and will report back to Council mid-2017-2018.

The adequacy and comprehensiveness of Continuous Professional Development/Training for staff has been demonstrated in 2016-2017 in the following ways:

- One SPO successfully applied to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI, 2012), Improvement Advisor Programme, hosted by the South Eastern Trust which commenced in January 2017
- Continuous professional development training or accreditation pursued by other members of the workforce within their professional requirements and mandatory training requirements set out by NIPEC.

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 Professional Officer (SPO) who is accountable for the effective management and delivery of the aims and objectives of each project. SPOs are assisted by administrative and clerical support and have ready access to IT and library support in order to ensure the effective utilisation of skills and technologies. The work of NIPEC is underpinned by research and evidence from a review of relevant literature.

## Nursing and Midwifery Governance

There are a number of examples which demonstrate how NIPEC supports nursing and midwifery practice specifically through gathering and examining data including the following:

Audit information relating to the standard of nurse record keeping practice across the five HSC Trusts has continued to be gathered on the NIPEC Online Audit Tool (NOAT). 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 Chief Nursing Officer business meetings with Executive Nurses. Record keeping practice continues to be an area raised in reviews and public inquiries regionally and nationally, therefore NIPEC continues to keep a focus on this area of practice. The indicators within the audit tool were reviewed during 2016-2017 and an updated tool developed for online use. The standards outlined within NOAT 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.



## Organisational Governance

NIPEC received no formal complaints in 2016-2017, so no lessons can be drawn from this with regard to improvements to the work of NIPEC however, as an organisation we are not complacent and continue to use feedback from stakeholders along with new evidence to shape and take forward work.

NIPEC also participates in the HSC Control Assurance Standards which are defined by the. From the nine standards which are relevant to NIPEC's role and function it obtained the level of 'substantial' compliance i.e. a score of 75-99% for all nine areas. The individual compliance scores for the year 2016-2017 compared to the year 2015-2016 are as follows:

Control Assurance Standard	Score in 2016-2017 - %	Score in 2015-2016 - %	Variation in %
Governance (Core Standard)	94	94	-
Financial Management (Core Standard)	89	89	-
Risk Management (Core Standard)	90	89	+1
Health & Safety	92	92	-
Information Management	83	83	-
ICT	94	94	-
Fire Resources	96	96	-
Human Resources (Note: New template issued by for 2016-17)	86	97	-11
Management of Purchasing & Supply	91	91	-

### ***Measuring Progress and Improving Performance***

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

- Development of a *Career Framework* to support specialist practice nursing in order to provide clarity about these roles in Northern Ireland, in both statutory and independent sectors
- NIPEC continued to work with the Co-Chairs of *Q2020 Attributes Framework Implementation Group* to support the implementation of the *Framework* across the HSC system
- Participation in the *IHI Improvement Advisor Programme*: This programme facilitates delegates to develop their competence in Quality Improvement and in understanding measurement, variation and how to sustain improvement. The IHI Improvement Advisor programme being undertaken by an SPO, has commenced a joint project with a colleague from Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) who is a participant on the South Eastern





HSC Trust Social Work Safety, Quality and Experience (SQE) Programme.  
The aim of the project is to increase the confidence of staff undertaking medication assistance/prompting with tenants in a Supported Living Centre for Older People.

## Raising the Standards

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

NIPEC uses a range of approaches to achieve this aim all of which rely on collaboration with our stakeholders. NIPEC is committed to continuing these relationships and maintaining our focus on supporting the provision of safe and effective care.

### ***Stakeholder Involvement***

A key function of NIPEC is to engage with stakeholders throughout the HSC in order to gain consensus and ensure that outputs are relevant, facilitate translation and implementation into practice, and hence raise standards and quality. In each of the work streams SPO's engage with stakeholders from Trusts, Independent Sector, Universities, Professional Bodies, to ensure that the voice of key stakeholders are heard, listened to and incorporated into the work stream activity and outputs.

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.

Stakeholders have been involved in the review of minimum care standards in the following ways:

- ***IHI Improvement Programme***: testing small changes with staff in a Supported Living environment (as detailed on page 30)
- ***Integrated Career and Competency Framework for Diabetes Nursing (Trend-UK 2015)***: NIPEC project managed Diabetes Specialist Nurses (Adult) in Acute and Community settings alongside service users and managers in Diabetes UK, HSC Trust and PHA senior Nurses, to review the Integrated Career and Competency Framework for Diabetes Nursing (Trend-UK 2015). Specific core competences were adapted and developed from this Framework with the permission of Trend-UK and the core elements a job description were produced.
- ***Recording Care Project***: Leadership and management of the regional *Recording Care Project* seeks to continuously monitor the standard of nurse record keeping practice to demonstrate improvement, whilst simultaneously developing resources to support improvement. During 2016-2017 this included

final sign off of a regional emergency care nursing record, the piloting and progression of a new model of nursing care planning and the progression of work relating to a regional data set for learning disabilities nursing. The approach includes an audit and improvement cycle for nurse record keeping practice, supported by relevant resources within the NIPEC Improving Record Keeping Practice mini site. 2016-2017 also saw a review of the NIPEC Online Audit Tool (NOAT) and redevelopment of the resources online to support record keeping practice.

- *Senior Nurse Out of Hours*: the scope of this project was to address the recommendations of the RQIA (2013) report with an aim to ensure career pathways exist for nurses to prepare to take on the key role of Senior Nurse Out of Hours and the standardisation of job titles.

### ***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.

During 2016-2017, NIPEC continued its efforts in relation to Personal and Public Involvement (PPI). Specifically, this included NIPEC engaging a small personal and public involvement e-forum, comprising of members of the public interested in the work of NIPEC. NIPEC recognises the power, importance and impact of PPI in its work streams and takes 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 NIPECs commitment to PPI in 2016-2017:

- NIPEC is a member of the *Regional Personal & Public Involvement Forum* which directs the approach to this engagement and activity in the region
- When quality assuring non NMC regulated education activities NIPEC promoted the involvement of patients, clients and carers in the planning design and delivery of educational programmes where appropriate/ relevant
- The use of a survey for adult in-patient units in Northern Ireland testing a new model of nursing care planning during 2016-2017, to explore the opinion of people within these wards as to the person-centredness, co-productive and efficacy of the approach
- Tenants in a Supported Living Centre are members of a Quality Improvement (QI) project team

- Work on Midwifery Supervision facilitated by NIPEC consisted of a subgroup of a Task and Finish group which was established to work with women, midwives and Supervisors of Midwives (SOMs). They considered three key areas relating to the involvement of women; awareness of the role and access to it; advocacy and the effectiveness of the role; auditing and involving women in monitoring. The group developed a number of specific recommendations in each area which were included in the final project report and will inform the ongoing work of the overarching Nursing and Midwifery Supervision Framework for NI
- The regional 10,000 voices project, continue to be considered in the planning, development and review of all NIPEC's work.

### ***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 patient-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 Senior

Professional Officers also lead or contribute to a wide range of strategic forums and networks to support innovation and quality improvement and to build links with local research organisations. This was demonstrated in 2016-2017 by:

- A Senior Professional Officer delivered a joint presentation with the Chief Nursing Officer on *An Attributes Framework for Leading Improvement and Person-centred Care* at the International Nursing & Midwifery Research and Education Conference at the Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland
- RCN Centenary Conference Birmingham: poster presentation on Attributes Framework Recording Care and Gateway to Nursing
- RCN Centenary Conference Birmingham; oral presentation on the *Professional Framework for Emergency Care Nurses in a concurrent session*
- A Senior Professional Officer provided expertise in relation to a national group to advise on nurse staffing tools for Wales
- A Senior Professional Officer took up membership of a five country leadership group to support and promote the use of eHealth approaches in nursing and midwifery.

NIPEC has contributed to GAIN guidance and regional clinical audits as follows:

- A SPO is a member of the GAIN strategic committee, contributing to support the work of this organisation
- An SPO has contributed to work which led to the development of Gain guidelines for 'Admission to Midwife Led Units in Northern Ireland' (GAIN 2016). Work has now commenced on work to develop GAIN guidelines for 'Planning Birth at Home in Northern Ireland' and NIPEC will continue to be involved in this work.

In addition, NIPEC has led a partnership across the five HSC Trusts to standardise the current approach to recording nursing care plans. The PACE project, which has been piloted in all five Trusts and highly valued by nursing staff, has provided evidence of improved standards of nurse care planning and increased person-centredness, the new model ensuring that a true approach of coproduction underpins nurse care planning across the region.

NIPEC is committed to ensuring a person-centred approach permeates the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of all of its work streams.

## **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” (DoH, 2011a).***

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

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

In support of the delivery of high quality patient care, NIPEC retains a focus on work developed through robust strategic alliances to translate regional direction and policy into practice and provide resources which 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***

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

**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 and communication is undertaken with the aim of ensuring stakeholders are kept informed and updated on the work of NIPEC and this forms a fundamental part of our work. Importantly this provides stakeholders with the opportunity to be involved and to participate in NIPEC’s work and ultimately contribute to improved standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives, and an improved patient/client experience. The expertise of the Council spans the different care settings which enables NIPEC to ensure that the voice of stakeholders is heard at this level of the organisation.

During 2016-2017 NIPEC worked to better understand key priorities and needs across the HSC system and across independent, voluntary and education provider organisations and at individual registrant level. For example, NIPEC is continuing to review involvement with its stakeholders and a review of its Public Involvement Policy is in final draft. 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.

During 2016-2017, the NIPEC senior professional team has delivered a range of workshops, information sharing road shows, presentations, focus groups, surveys and publications to its stakeholders, including:

- Nursing and midwifery registrants and students
- DoH, executive and senior nurses and midwives
- Education providers
- Independent and voluntary sector
- Professional organisations
- NIPEC PPI e-forum and the general public
- NIPEC has also contributed to the regional HSC PPI forum and the development of a PPI e-learning resource
- The Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities (RNLD) Forum which is coordinated by a SPO in NIPEC. This has been used as an opportunity to very successfully disseminate and share information within the RNLD workforce.

An Engagement and Communication Strategy continues to influence, guide and support our work streams with the aim of ensuring the wider HSC and its organisations remain informed of NIPEC's work. During 2016-2017 we 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, Health and Social Care organisations, the voluntary, independent and private sector, the education institutions, the Business Services Organisation 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 and to influence, develop and maintain working partnerships and relationships which support NIPEC as an organisation and ultimately the nursing and midwifery workforce.

The following are examples of how engagement with stakeholders has been incorporated into professional work streams.

## *NIPEC's Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum*

In April 2016 an information session was provided for Independent and Voluntary Sector Forum members on employer's responsibilities in relation to revalidation. A survey of the membership took place in June/July 2016 to review the purpose of the Forum, its membership and how often it should meet. The responses from the survey were very positive about the benefits of the Forum and the following were agreed:

- Meet bi-annually and continue to be invited to NIPEC conference
- Include regular updates from RQIA
- NIPEC regular updates to include circulation of monthly SCAN publications

In addition, NIPEC is exploring with the forum members how to make the meetings more accessible to those in the Independent and Voluntary Sector. This will include the use of social media and other formats to publicise events and provide access to resources.

### *Supervision*

Through the Central Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee (CNMAC) chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), NIPEC was commissioned to lead work to explore the potential for the development of a Nursing and Midwifery Supervision Framework for Northern Ireland that could be positioned under one policy directive.

The work recognises that nursing and midwifery are two separate professions along with recommendations for legislative changes to the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 to remove the statutory supervision of Midwives. The work, which commenced in September 2016, will also explore if the extant policy for Safeguarding Children Supervision for Nurses and Midwives should be reviewed and included in the Framework.

### *Revalidation*

During 2016-2017 NIPEC built on the work progressed on revalidation for nurses and midwives via NIPEC's online portfolio. In April 2016 NIPEC had an article published on Revalidation in the Perioperative Nursing Journal (Cannon and McCutcheon, 2016).

### *Recording Care*

Engagement with clinical experts in emergency care, learning disabilities and children's care settings took place via multiple workshops to finalise or review the development of regional nurse records and data sets for use across the five HSC Trusts. In addition, multiple workshops were held to support the pilot testing of a new approach to nursing care planning in Northern Ireland. The work was presented to a



multi-professional group from across the United Kingdom in relation to the nursing contribution within an Electronic Health and Care Record, supported by experience and learning from the Recording Care project.

### *Professional Framework for Emergency Care Nurses*

In March 2017 the Professional Framework for Emergency Care Nursing microsite was officially launched at the NIPEC Annual Conference following extensive engagement with stakeholders. The framework is a web based resource, linked to the RCN Emergency Care Association competencies which provide information to support professional and career development for Emergency Care Nurses in Northern Ireland. The Framework is a useful resource for those nurses who are interested in a career in Emergency Care or Emergency Care Nurses who want to further develop their career. NIPEC continues to work with stakeholders to raise the profile of the microsite delivering information sessions to Emergency nurses locally and at conferences across the UK and Internationally. Information flyers on the work were developed in partnership with key stakeholders.



### *Annual Stakeholder Event*

NIPEC's annual stakeholder event with Council Members took place on 21 September 2016. This annual event is planned with the intention of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to support the development of NIPEC's corporate plan and Business Plan (2017-2018). Twenty four representatives from a wide cross-section of stakeholder organisations who work closely with NIPEC attended the event. These included the Independent and Voluntary sectors, NMC, the five HSC Trusts, the Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Midwives, Ulster University, Queens University Belfast and the Clinical Education Centre.

### *Strengthening the Commitment: NI Action Plan*

During 2016-2017 NIPEC worked in partnership with the RCN at the request of the NI Collaborative (the group established by the CNO to take forward the actions in the NI Action Plan) to organise the inaugural meeting of the Professional Development Forum for Registered Learning Disabilities Nurses (RNLDS). Fifty seven front line RNLDS from across the province attended from a range of organisations including the HSC Trusts, the Independent Sector, Educational Institutions and professional bodies.



NIPEC's Chief Executive and Senior Professional Officers were 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 2016-2017 include:

- GAIN
- Quality 2020 Project Groups
- Regional PPI Forum
- HSCB Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Stakeholder Reference Group
- Professional Wellbeing and Resilience Working Group: An SPO contributes to this group (previously Resilience Working Group) which was initiated by the NIMDTA and QUB (2015) with the aim of promotion of a collaborative and integrated approach to the development of increased resilience and wellbeing among doctors and dentists in Northern Ireland.

### ***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 plays an important role in supporting a flexible approach to the learning and development of nurses and midwives and continues to explore the production of resources, which can be used creatively and flexibly, to enable registrants to enhance their competence and performance in order to improve the quality of care they provide to their patients and clients. NIPEC continues to look for and engage in opportunities to spread resources that enhance learning and development for nurses and midwives 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.**

Additional examples of the role of NIPEC in supporting learning and development have been provided in the section *Transforming the Culture* (online portfolio) and *Strengthening the Workforce* (quality assurance of non-NMC commissioned programmes). During 2016-2017 the CE of NIPEC and a NIPEC SPO contributed to the development of the draft NMC "Future Nurse" pre-registration Nursing standards. The NMC plan to issue these for consultation in 2017-2018.

## Annual Conference

NIPEC's annual conference is a valuable opportunity for NIPEC to showcase its work and share learning and contribute to the development of HSC staff. One hundred and sixty delegates from across NI attended NIPEC's Annual Conference in March 2017 the theme of which was "Maximising Outcomes, Embracing Challenges".

Evaluations were extremely positive and affirmed that the aims of the conference were achieved, with participants stating that they valued the opportunity to learn from the speakers presenting and they also stated that subject included in the conference were highly relevant to their practice. The speaker's presentations are recorded and posted in "YouTube" on NIPEC's website, to be accessible to a wider audience. <http://www.nipec.hscni.net/home/previous-events/conferencevents/nipec-annualconference2017/>

Speakers and contributors to the conference included:

- Professor Rafael Bengoa, Director of the Institute for Health & Strategy, Bilbao, Spain, Chair of the Expert Panel for the future configuration of Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care
- Professor Sir Richard Barnett, Chair of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group
- Professor Tanya McCance, Director for the Institute of Nursing & Health Research and Head of the Person-Centred Practice Research Centre at Ulster University in Northern Ireland.
- Maura Devlin, Northern Ireland member and vice chair of NMC. She is also an Independent Management Consultant and Associate with the Leadership Centre.
- Thomas Whitelaw Project Engagement Lead, Scotland's Health and Social care Alliance's Dementia Carer Voices Project.
- Brian John Spencer, artist who created 'live-drawings' of speakers throughout the conference.
- Professor Charlotte McArdle, CNO, Linsey Sheerin, Chair of the Emergency Nurses Network, Royal College of Nursing and Frances Cannon, Senior Professional Officer at NIPEC.



- Professor Geraldine Walters CBE, Director of Nursing and Midwifery Education Standards and Policy at the NMC.
- Alan Corry Finn, Executive Director of Nursing and Director of Primary Care & Older People's Services, Western Health and Social Care Trust.



NIPEC builds on the success of each conference by reviewing the formal and informal feedback and evaluations in order to enhance the content and relevance of the subsequent conference. The following feedback from the NIPEC Conference 2017 demonstrates that this was achieved:



NIPEC believes that it is essential to ensure that shared opportunities for learning maximise the potential for having an impact on patient care. The annual conference continues to be a valuable mechanism for enabling this to happen.

## Conclusion

This report clearly demonstrates the strategies and activities which NIPEC has progressed in 2016-2017 in order to protect and improve quality in health and social care in Northern Ireland. NIPEC works to a clear agenda to fulfil its statutory functions as outlined in the Strategy Map, and progressed via the NIPEC Business Plan.

NIPEC has evidenced its commitment to the provision of a quality service and will continue to do so going forward. Taking into account the changing clinical, social, financial and political climate we anticipate there will be continued challenges in achieving our aims. However, we have an experienced and highly skilled workforce within and outside of the organisation which enables us to achieve a quality service despite these challenges.

NIPEC's role has become increasingly significant resulting in a high volume of work with tangible outcomes and products articulated through work taken forward directly in response to professional, policy, strategic and clinical priorities. The work of NIPEC also continues to grow in response to broader risks and challenges which exist across the delivery of health and social care. The regional approach adopted by NIPEC secures effective, timely and efficient approaches 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 in earlier years, which remain relevant, can be accessed on <http://www.nipec.hscni.net>

## References

- Cannon F and McCutcheon K. (2016) Nursing and midwifery revalidation (2016) Journal of Perioperative Practice April 2016 Vol 26 Issue 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.
- Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (2011b). *Records Management: Good Management Good Records*. Belfast: DHSSPS.
- Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety (2012). *A Strategy for Maternity Care in Northern Ireland 2012 – 2018*. Belfast: DHSSPS.
- 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.
- Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (2014). *Modernising Learning Disabilities Nursing Review: Strengthening the Commitment. Northern Ireland Action Plan*. Belfast: DHSSPS.
- GAIN (2014) Admission to Midwife-Led Units in Northern Ireland available from [www.rqia.org.uk](http://www.rqia.org.uk) (accessed August 2017)
- Health and Personal Social Service Act (Northern Ireland) (2002) Available at: [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20091023115527/opsi.gov.uk/legislation/northernireland/acts/acts2002/en/niaen\\_20020009\\_en.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20091023115527/opsi.gov.uk/legislation/northernireland/acts/acts2002/en/niaen_20020009_en.pdf) (accessed).
- Institute for HealthCare Improvement (2012) *A Guide to Measuring the Triple Aim: Population Health, Experience of Care, and Per Capita Cost*. Available at: <http://www.ihc.org/resources/Pages/IHIWhitePapers/AGuidetoMeasuringTripleAim.aspx> (accessed)
- Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (2016). *Quality Assurance Framework for Monitoring Development and Education Programmes Commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety. (Revised)*. Belfast: NIPEC.
- Nursing and Midwifery Council (2015) *The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses and Midwives*. London: NMC.
- NMC (2001) The Nursing and Midwifery Order available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2002/253/contents/made> (accessed August 2016).
- RQIA (2013) Review of Hospitals at Nights and Weekends available at [www.rqia.org](http://www.rqia.org) (accessed August 2017)
- Trend- UK (2015) *An Integrated Career and Competency Framework for Diabetes Nursing 4th edition, Version 9*. London: SB Communications Group.)

### 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 and 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 register)
- Six Lay Members
- Ex-Officio Member (Chief Nursing Officer, ).

During 2016-2017 NIPEC's Council met on four occasions (four public meetings).

## Audit and Risk Committee

### *Membership*

- Two Professional Members
- Two Lay Members
- Also, in attendance are the NIPEC Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Services; and representatives from NIPEC's External Auditors, the Northern Ireland Audit Office, Internal Audit, BSO and a financial representative from the BSO.

### *Functions*

The Audit and Risk Committee is an advisory body with no executive powers, other than those specifically delegated in the 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, which are requested to co-operate with the Committee in the conduct of its enquiries. Request for work, and reports received, from internal audit are 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 completes annually the National Audit Office's 'Audit Committee Self-Assessment Checklist' in which it assesses itself against best practice. A copy of this is forwarded to the's Central Arm's Length Bodies Governance Unit. The outcome of the 2016-2017 self-assessment was that NIPEC adhered to best practice for those areas which were applicable.



During 2016-2017 NIPEC's Audit Committee met on a total of three occasions rather than the planned four. This was due to there being no issues identified by the External Auditor nor the NIAO arising from the audit of the NIPEC 'Annual Report & Accounts 2015-2016', NIPEC did not hold a June 2016 meeting as per NIAO advice.

All audit assignments included in the 2016-2017 Internal Audit Plan, approved by the Audit and Risk Committee, were completed.

A mid-year assurance statement was provided from the Head of Internal Audit to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting held in October 2016, as part of the process to assist the Chief Executive in the completion of the Mid-Year Assurance Statement.

Also, in a report dated 21 March 2016, on a year-end follow-up on outstanding internal audit recommendations, the Internal Auditor noted that, ***"12 or 75% of the 16 recommendations examined were fully implemented, a further 4 (25%) were partially implemented at the time of the review"***. No priority one findings were outstanding.

The Internal Audit Review outcomes for 2016-2017, therefore, showed the following to be classified as:

**Financial Review - 'Satisfactory Assurance'**

- No priority one weaknesses identified

**Risk Management – 'Satisfactory Assurance'**

- No priority one weaknesses identified

**Information Governance - 'Satisfactory Assurance'**

- No priority one weaknesses identified

**Controls Assurance Verification**

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

*"My overall opinion for the year ended 31 March 2017 is that there is a **satisfactory** system of internal control designed to meet the organisation's objectives."*

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.

NIPEC has continued to have in place two risk registers. A high level risk register which is updated monthly and goes to each meeting of the Council and an operational risk register which is also updated monthly and goes to each meeting of the Business Team and the Audit and Risk committee.

As an example of how NIPEC seeks to improve its systems and procedures is the internal audit report on the 'Risk Management in 2016-2017', where the following action has been taken forward based on the recommendations contained within the report:

- NIPEC will from April 2017 cease to produce two risk registers i.e. a high level risk register and an operational risk register. Instead it will now produce a single 'NIPEC Corporate Risk register' to log and record progress on the identified risks to the organisation.

### Remuneration Committee

The Remuneration Committee comprises a membership of all the Council Members, with the exception of the four who serve on the Audit and Risk Committee. Its role is the managing 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
- recommending an overall banding and award for Senior Executive.

### Information on the quality of NIPEC's activities

All meetings of both the Council and the Audit & Risk Committee were quorate during the year. 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 met and continues to meet 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 monthly, one-to-one meeting with each member of the SMT, which covers all aspects of each officer's work.

### **Governance Performance**

NIPEC identified a strategic objective for 2013-2016 to maintain 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 2016-2017*, include the following:

- NIPEC updated the assurance framework monthly and took an updated version to each quarterly meeting of both the Audit and Risk Committee and the Council during the year. This register covered the following five areas:

1. **Governance and Performance:** - Delivering the financial savings productivity and cash releasing efficiencies towards achieving year-end financial break even.
2. **Governance and Performance:** - Business Plan objectives and work plan 2016-2017
3. **Governance:** - Council membership vacancies
4. **Leadership:** - Interim Chief Executive post
5. **Accommodation:** - Exit clause in accommodation lease

- The operational risk register was updated each month at the Business Team meeting and reported on at the quarterly meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. The total number of risks, over nine areas, as at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 had been identified as 7, with none shown as high, 4 (57.1%) as medium and 3 (42.9%) as low. Both registers, with updates, were posted regularly on the website during the year.

- NIPEC received, on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2016, details of its revenue resource limit (RRL) for 2016-17 of £1,214,484 and that due to significant challenges for the to secure a balanced budget and address the overall funding gap in 2016-2017 the RRL reflected a 5% reduction of £62,727.

Subsequent amendments to the RRL during the year were:

- *July 2016*, additional funding of £115,477 to support the HSC Voluntary Exit Scheme.
- NIPEC surrendered the following funds during the year as follows:
  - £18,000 – the ring fenced provision made within the 2015-16 accounts for accommodation dilapidation costs.
  - £115,477 non-recurring as part of the Spring Supplementary Estimate – October 2016 Monitoring Return
  - April 2017 surrender of £16,000

resulting in a final revised RRL of £1,180,484

- NIPEC's financial accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 showed a surplus of £7,566 or 0.57% 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 2016-2017 financial accounts.
- As part of its efficiency programme, within its Property Asset Management (PAM) plan, NIPEC accommodated the locating of 10 PPC staff from February 2017 within its current accommodation by redesigning its IT equipment and manual filing storage facility and making more efficient use of workstation locations.
- Increased use continued to be made of ICT equipment resulting in a continued increase in the number of meetings held in NIPEC that were either face to face or via teleconference due to the reduction in travel across stakeholder groups. NIPEC as the lead organisation in a significant number of programmes of work was required to host these meetings.
- Under the zero-based budgeting approach, introduced in 2012-2013, for capital allocations or the Capital Resource Limit (CRL), bids have to be submitted against the three categories of *Contractual Commitments, Essential Projects and Desirable Projects*.

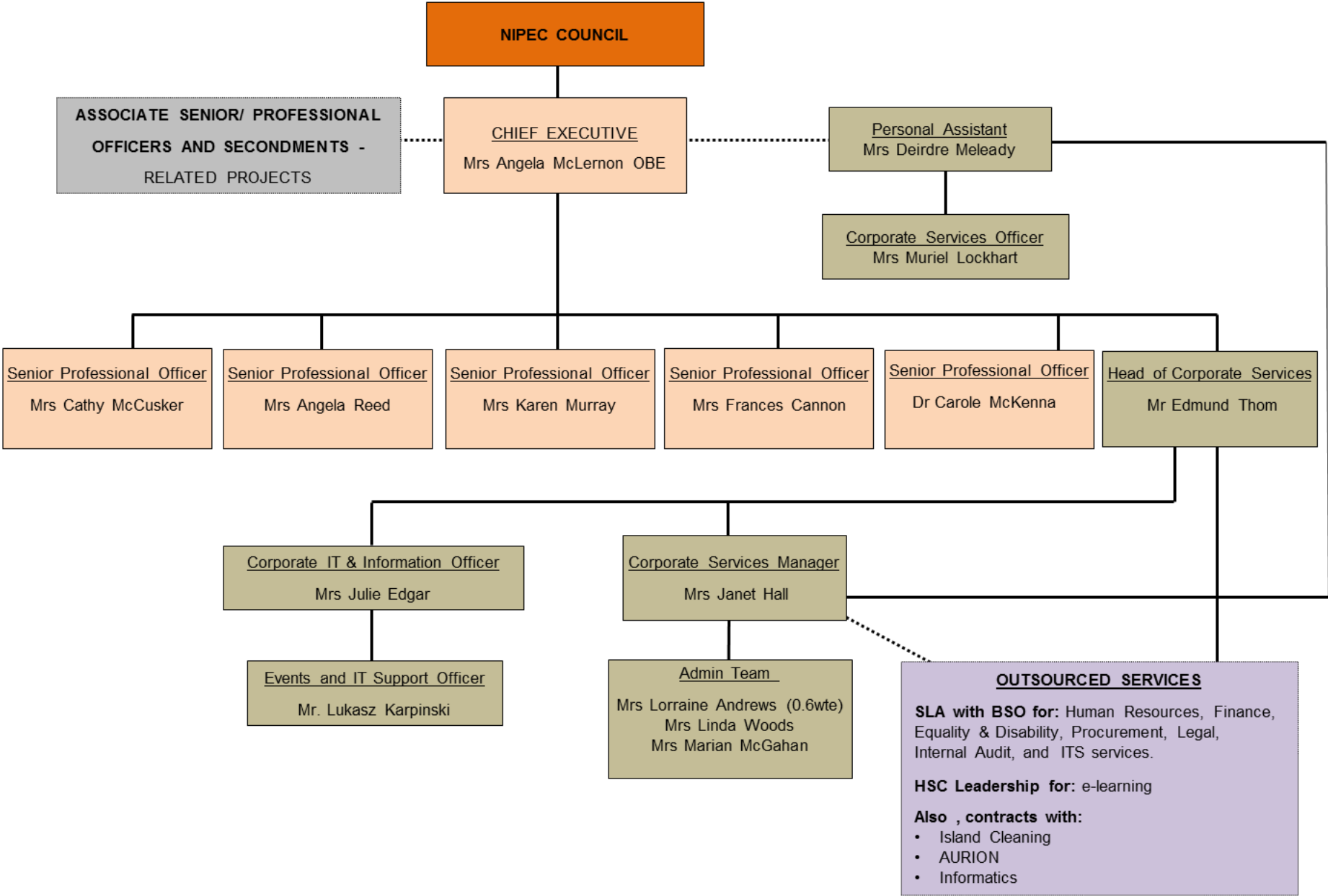
In 2016-2017 NIPEC made no bids for capital resources.

- During the year, NIPEC complied with its statutory duties in respect of:
  - Production of the annual report and accounts'
  - Equality and disability

- FOI Act, 2000
  - DPA, 1998
  - Records management
  - Bribery Act, 2010
  - Privacy impact assessment
- NIPEC assured its compliance to obtain the level of '*substantive*' compliance i.e. a score of 75-99% in 2016-2017 with the nine relevant controls assurance standards identified for NIPEC. The individual compliance scores were as follows and details were placed on the NIPEC website:
    - Governance - 94%
    - Financial Management – 89 %
    - Risk Management - 90%
    - Health & Safety – 92%
    - Information Management – 83%
    - Information & Communication Technology - 94%
    - Fire Safety - 96%
    - Human Resources - 86% ( *Note: new template introduced by* )
    - Management of Purchasing & Supply - 91%
- NIPEC's policies and procedures are monitored and reviewed during the year, as appropriate, and a 'policy grid' and 'procedure grid' are updated and taken to each quarterly Audit and Risk Committee meeting. As at 31 March 2017, the outcome was:
    - NIPEC/BSO Policies & Strategies
 

Through a systematic process of review and updating 40 policy/strategy documents – 34 or 85% classified as '*green*' that is to say were updated within the timeframe for review (of the 4 not in the green sector, 2 were awaiting clarification from HR on regional agreements)
    - NIPEC/BSO Procedures
 

Through a systematic process of review and updating 22 documents - 19 or 90% classified as '*green*' that is to say were updated within the timeframe for review







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  
[www.nipec.hscni.net](http://www.nipec.hscni.net)

**September 2017**

**ISBN: 978-1-903580-58-5**