

NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN 2015/16

NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL BUSINESS PLAN APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) is responsible for the regulation and registration of the Social Care Workforce in Northern Ireland. It is an Arms-Length Body, sponsored by the Department of Health, Social Service and Public Safety (DHSSPS). There are currently over 22,000 people employed in the social care sector who are registered with the NISCC. One of the NISCC's key priorities is to work with the DHSSPS to ensure that all of the social care workforce are required to register – this would include Domiciliary and Day Care Workers. This will support the NISCC's overarching aim of protecting the public when using social care services.

The current financial pressures on the public sector in Northern Ireland apply equally to the NISCC and these financial pressures will be a key challenge for the NISCC as it aims to deliver on its statutory functions during 2015/16 and future years. The NISCC's Business Plan for 2015/16 therefore reflects the need to concentrate resources on protecting front line activity and core services while ensuring the NISCC breaks even at the end of the financial year. This will mean that some projects planned for future years will need to be revisited with a concentrated effort to do things differently within a very restricted budget.

The NISCC will be working closely with all its stakeholders, including Registrants, service users, carers and employers, during 2015/16, to ensure that it continues to deliver the right quality services within the budgetary challenges outlined in this Business Plan.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 –

To improve the quality of social care and ensure a safe and social care workforce through workforce regulation

The NISCC maintains a Register of over 22,000 Registrants across Northern Ireland, including Social Workers, Managers of Residential, Day and Domiciliary Care, and Students studying for a Degree in Social Work. The NISCC is responsible for ensuring the Register is correct at all times so that a member of the public or an employer can readily ascertain whether a member of the Social Care workforce is registered and therefore considered fit to practise in their profession.

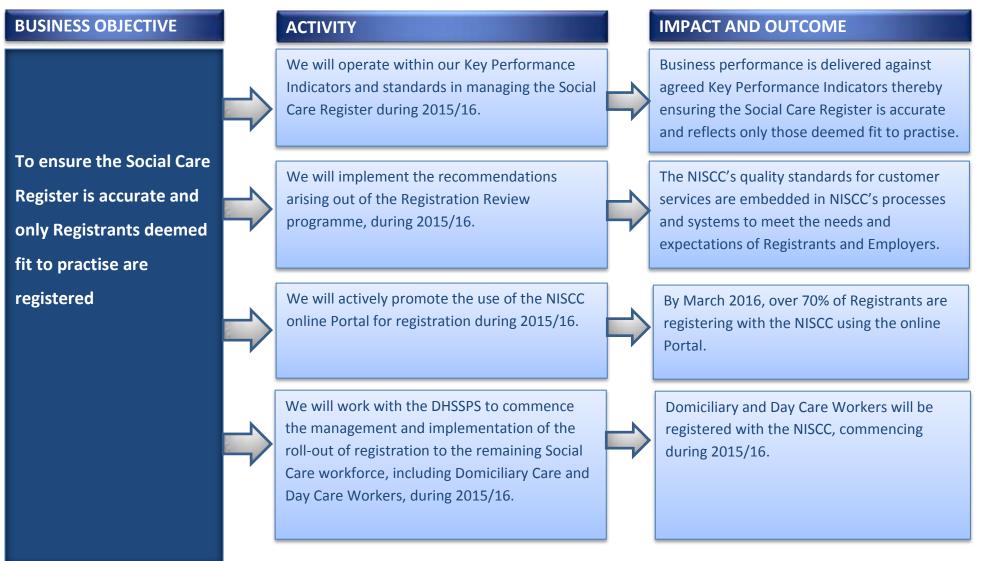
There are approximately 12,000 Social Care Workers in Northern Ireland to be included in the final stages of compulsory registration which will achieve full registration for the Social Care Workforce. The majority of these workers are employed within the Domiciliary Care Workforce. The NISCC and the DHSSPS are working together to begin the roll out of registration to this workforce during the business year 2015/2016, the period of this plan.

The Registration of the Social Care workforce is strictly regulated and the NISCC works closely with Registrants, Employers and other stakeholders to ensure the registration service it provides meets the needs of those groups, including exploring how best to maximise the use of modern technology while ensuring that our stakeholders are able to use our services in ways which best meet their individual needs.

3

REGISTRATION:

The NISCC has set the following business objectives for 2015/16 in support of its Registration function –



REGULATION:

The NISCC is responsible for the regulation of the Social Care workforce, including investigating complaints regarding the conduct of that workforce. The NISCC must ensure that those registered with it are fit and capable to practice in their chosen profession and to investigate where a member of that workforce fails to meet the high standards expected of them. This is an important public protection role so that those who use social care services can feel confident in the Social Care workforce who are supporting them. The NISCC has developed new Standards of Conduct and Practice for social workers and social care workers, in partnership with stakeholders, including service users and carers, to ensure that the Standards are suitable and measurable and meet the expectations of employers, service users and carers.

The NISCC has set the following business objectives for 2015/16 in support of its Regulation function –

| BUSINESS OBJECTIVE | ΑCTIVITY | IMPACT AND OUTCOME |
|--|--|--|
| To ensure Regulation | We will operate within our Key Performance Indicators and standards when investigating complaints and completing suitability assessments during 2015/16. | Business performance is delivered against agreed Key Performance Indicators thereby ensuring only those fit to practice are held on the Register and complaints are investigated in a thorough and timely manner. |
| supports Registrants and Employers, to meet agreed | We will work with the DHSSPS to bring forward amended legislation and ensure associated rules are put in place to fully support Fitness to Practice by March 2016. | The Model of Regulation is risk based and proportionate, ensuring that a broader range of sanctions are available. |
| standards of conduct and practice. | We will promote the new Standards of Conduct and Practice across the Social Care sector by December 2015, to ensure robust quality standards and guidance are in place. | Quality standards are in place through which Registrants are valued and the impact of their work is recognised by the profession. |
| | We will deliver Committee Management within our Key Performance Indicators and standards during 2015/16. | Registration and Conduct Committees are managed effectively within the governance framework. |

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

To ensure that qualifications and standards deliver a skilled and committed Social Care Workforce

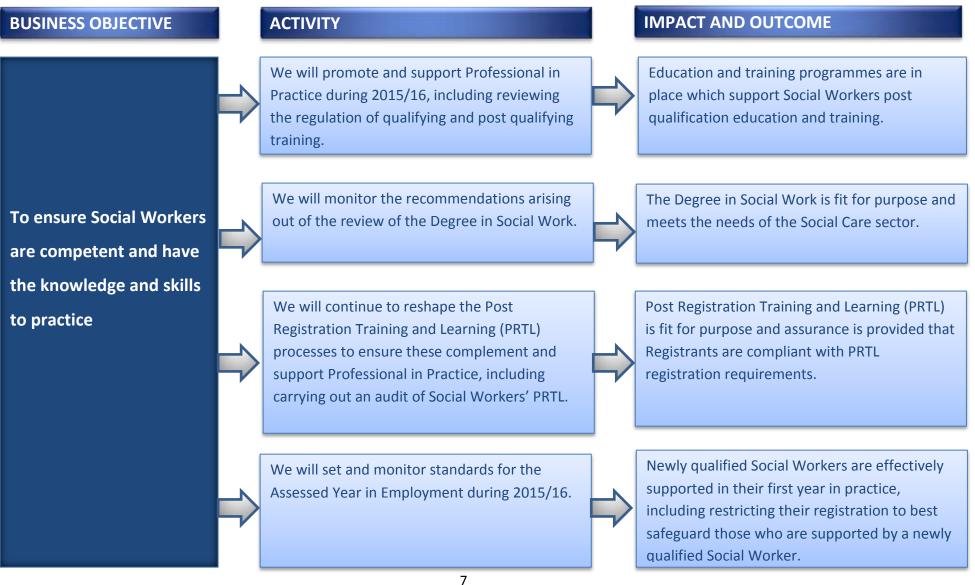
The NISCC has a statutory duty to approve and monitor standards of training for social workers at Degree and Post Qualifying level. Newly qualified social workers are supported in their first year in practice through the Assessed Year in Employment. The NISCC places a condition on a new social worker's registration until this assessed year is completed. Social Workers are then required to complete specified training aligned to the NISCC Professional Development Framework as part of PRTL for Social Work to consolidate their learning.

The NISCC is also responsible for standards of training and development for the wider social care workforce. This includes reviewing and developing vocational qualifications such as the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in Health & Social Care. Workforce development, registration and the involvement of people who use services and carers, adds value to services and benefits the sector and makes sure that people can be assured of effective services from a safe and skilled workforce. It helps underpin the key policy direction contained in Transforming Your Care towards the provision of care in the community or at home; supporting choice, independence and dignity for service users.

Increased numbers of people are requiring care in their own home and they must be supported by a strategic approach to social care workforce recruitment and development and the NISCC is actively supporting the delivery of this work, including using new technologies and supporting workers who are lone workers and may be the only point of contact for a service user or family unit.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

The NISCC has set the following business objectives for 2015/16 in support of its Workforce Development function –



To ensure the standards underpinning training and continuous development meet the skills needs of the Social Care workforce

ACTIVITY

We will work collaboratively with employers and others, through the Workforce Development Partnership, to establish a more comprehensive overview of the needs of the Social Care Workforce.

We will maximise the use and development of modern technology using apps, and other media to enable information sharing, learning and good practice across the Social Care workforce, during 2015/16.

We will continue to reshape the Post Registration Training and Learning (PRTL) processes to ensure these are fit for purpose, including carrying out an audit of Social Care Workers' PRTL.

IMPACT AND OUTCOME

Robust information and evidence is available to develop a Framework for the Social Care Workforce to best meet their needs and the needs of employers.

The Social Care Workforce has support and information readily available regardless of their working location and social care role.

A report will be produced for Council to provide assurance that Social Care Registrants are compliant with PRTL registration.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

To raise awareness and knowledge of the work of the NISCC and ensure its work is informed and influenced by users of social care services, carers, registrants, employers and other stakeholders

The NISCC's commitment to meaningful engagement and raising awareness of the role of the NISCC, and of the important Social Care workforce it supports, continues to be reflected as one of its three strategic objectives which NISCC has agreed at the highest level with its Department and Minister.

The NISCC will continue to ensure it promotes the excellent practice of social care in Northern Ireland and that the public, Ministers, local representatives and employers are well informed of the important work carried out by these workers, who, in total, represent 5% of the working population in Northern Ireland. [DN: check figure]

In addition to these commitments, the NISCC will be focusing on three key areas of engagement during 2015/16 -

- The launch and promotion of Professional in Practice the new framework for post qualification training for Social Workers;
- The launch and promotion of the new Standards of Conduct and Practice for the social care workforce the Standards describe the behaviours and standards expected of the Social Care workforce in carrying out their valuable work; and
- The further roll out of compulsory registration to the Domiciliary Care and Day Care workforce.

Each of these individual workstreams will require face to face engagement, information events and literature, together with on-going support and advice. The NISCC will be developing robust handling and engagement plans to ensure it is well placed to inform the workforce, employers, stakeholders and the public on how each of these initiatives affects them and, where relevant, the people they represent.

To engage with stakeholders to raise awareness and inform the work of the NISCC

ACTIVITY

We will implement the NISCC's Engagement Strategy with services users, carers, Registrants, employers and stakeholders to support all aspects of NISCC business including raising standards, promoting the Standards of Conduct and Practice and Professional in Practice.

We will use technology to help support the ways in which we will engage our stakeholders and the public to improve awareness of the work of the NISCC.

We will work with NISCC's customers and stakeholders to ascertain their views and experiences on the quality and impact of NISCC's services.

We will work with the Health and Social Care (HSC) system to ensure Social Care is at the core of HSC policy and initiatives.

IMPACT AND OUTCOME

Effective engagement and information sharing are in place with all NISCC's stakeholders and the wider public, supported by the work of the NISCC's formal Partnerships – Participation, Registrant, Professional in Practice and Workforce Development.

Focused and real-time communications with stakeholders and the wider public is in place through social media and online communications, in addition to traditional methods of communication which best meet the needs of the individuals or groups.

High quality customer services are delivered through a programme of continual improvement and engagement.

The NISCC, as a regulator of the Social Care workforce, effectively influences the social care agenda in Northern Ireland, in support of the Social Care workforce.

CORPORATE SERVICES

To ensure the NISCC has the necessary resources, people, governance and estates management arrangements in place to deliver its strategic objectives.

In support of its strategic objectives and core activity, the NISCC is required to have the necessary resources and staffing in place while ensuring it has effective and robust governance and estates management procedures in place that are proportionate, transparent and accountable.

In 2015/16, the NISCC will face the significant challenge of managing a much reduced budget from government and ensuring that the budget is appropriated to where it is needed most. This will require robust financial management on an on-going basis throughout the year and will require with the co-operation of staff, Council and stakeholders as relevant, while NISCC focuses on funding its core regulatory functions.

Operating within such a stringent financial operating environment, will mean that the NISCC must continue to ensure it has the right workforce with the right skills doing their jobs to the best of their ability to ensure excellent quality services are delivered throughout all aspects of NISCC business. The NISCC will therefore continue to invest in its workforce to ensure staff are motivated, skilled and capable of performing to high standards.

The NISCC has continued to demonstrate substantive assurance in its risk management processes and has a suite of work planned to ensure it maintains this, including in the areas of business governance, information governance and records management. In addition, the NISCC will under a strategic review of its office accommodation during 2015/16 to ensure its accommodation provides best value for money in the land and property market in Northern Ireland.

FINANCE:

To ensure the NISCC has the necessary financial resources in place to deliver the NISCC's Business Plan for 2015/16

HUMAN RESOURCES: To ensure the NISCC has the necessary staffing complement in place to deliver the NISCC's Business Plan for 2015/16

ACTIVITY

We will deliver and manage robust budgetary monitoring and reporting arrangements to support the delivery of the NISCC Business Plan for 2015/16 in accordance with Departmental and Legislative guidance.

We will work with relevant bodies to meet financial targets in relation to prompt payments and payment of undisputed invoices during 2015/16 in accordance with Departmental and Legislative guidance.

We will manage NISCC's staff complement to ensure staff are skilled and able to fulfil their roles and deliver quality services in all aspects of NISCC's business during 2015/16.

We will deliver a learning and development strategy during 2015/16 to ensure staff are adequately trained to do their jobs well.

IMPACT AND OUTCOME

NISCC is able to manage its priorities within its budgetary allocation and achieve the financial breakeven target of 0.25% or £20k (whichever is the greater) by March 2016, with any issues identified at an early stage and elevated within the governance infrastructure at the relevant level.

NISCC is compliant on government wide regulations concerning the effective and efficient throughput of invoices and achieves the minimum standard of paying 95% of undisputed invoices within 30 days throughout 2015-16.

NISCC has the a sustainable staff complement able to support the NISCC's key functions and front line services so that it can deliver on all of its business commitments and priorities.

NISCC's workforce is provided with relevant and appropriate training to do their jobs well so that the services it provides are of high quality and meet the needs of those who use the wide range of NISCC's services.



QUALITY: To deliver high quality services in all of our business that reflects the expectations of our service users, carers, registrants, employers and stakeholders.

ACTIVITY

We will support the implementation of Quality 2020 including ensuring quality outcomes are embedded in the NISCC business agenda during 2015/16.

IMPACT AND OUTCOME

The services provided by the NISCC demonstrate high quality provision in their development, delivery and impact. Quality is at the core of the work delivered by the NISCC and is used to measure its impact on its stakeholder groups.

[April 2015]