



# **ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN**

## **2025 – 2026**



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

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## Chair and Chief Executive Forward

As Council Chair and Chief Executive, we are pleased to present our 2025-2026 Business Plan. This was an opportunity for us to reflect on our achievements during 2024-2025 and outline what we will do over the next year to promote high standards of practice, education and professional development of the Nursing and Midwifery workforce. This Plan builds on what we have already achieved and supports the delivery of our strategic goals set out in our [Corporate Plan \(2024-28\)](#)<sup>1</sup>

We are mindful that NIPEC, along with our partner organisations, are challenged to deliver high quality work and services within challenging financial and resource constraints. Therefore, this year we devoted significant time and effort to engage with and understand what really matters to the Nursing and Midwifery professions and have ensured that this is a priority within this Plan.

I am delighted to report that the feedback from our partners has been extremely positive and we continue to ensure that NIPEC business demonstrates improvements and support across the Nursing and Midwifery professions in Northern Ireland. This ambitious Plan outlines a selection of our achievements in 2024 - 2025 and our priority objectives for the forthcoming year. It is designed to be flexible and relevant and we hope you will find it both informative and useful.



**Bronagh Scott**  
**Council Chair**



**Linda Kelly**  
**Chief Executive**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nipec.hscni.net/publications/corporate-strategies/>

## 2.0 Introduction

Over the 2024-2025 year, the NIPEC team engaged with senior nurses and midwives and frontline staff to ensure we were focusing on what was important to the professions. Our Plan reflects this and we will make best use of their resources and time through adopting a dynamic approach. This involves understanding and dealing with multiple factors and agendas. Whilst this plan outlines our key priorities there is an ongoing programme of communication, in collaboration with our stakeholders to address shorter-term and longer-term priorities as they arise within education, practice and professional development for the professions.

### 1.1 Who we are

The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC) was established as a Non-Departmental Public Body in 2002, under the Health and Personal Social Services (2002) Act.

As per the Act, the Statutory Functions of NIPEC and its Council include the promotion of;

- High standards of practice among nurses and midwives;
- High standards in the education and training of nurses and midwives; and
- The professional development of nurses and midwives

Without prejudice to the generality of the above, the Council may;

- Provide guidance on best practice for nurses and midwives; and
- Provide advice and information on matter relating to nursing and midwifery

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

- In accordance with any directions given to it by the Department; and
- Under the general guidance of the Department



# OUR VISION

Our vision has been informed through a series of engagement events with our stakeholders, including the public. This means that our vision has been defined by the people with whom, and for whom, we work. Our vision for the next four years reflects the intention to continue to work as an organisation that will be:

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

# OUR MISSION

NIPEC aims to promote further the highest standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate, person-centred services.

## 1.2 Internal Structure

NIPEC senior staff comprise of a Chief Executive supported by a senior team of seven Senior Professional Officers, and a Head of Corporate Services. A Corporate Team provides administrative and IT support to deliver NIPEC's programme of work and Project Support Officers and Associate Staff deliver on the professional agenda. Full details are contained within the NIPEC Organisational Chart (Appendix 1). During 2024-2025 NIPEC obtained full recruitment to funded posts.


NIPEC's Council is made up of a Chair, the Chief Executive and thirteen professional and lay members. NIPEC's Corporate Objectives align to our vision, mission and values. Throughout 2024-2025 NIPEC has continued investing in people, building a diverse team supporting the delivery of key business objectives.

## 1.3 Strategic Context

This Plan reflects the priorities of the Department of Health (DoH) three-year strategic plan, setting out a path for the future based on the three pillars of Stabilisation, Reform and Delivery. This includes;

- Stabilisation of services, including mitigating the inevitable deterioration of some services as a result of budgetary pressures;



- 
- Accelerated Reform of HSC to make the strategic changes necessary to enable the system to address the health needs of our citizens; and
  - Delivery of safe, sustainable, high-quality health and social care services as close as possible to citizens through primary, community, social and hospital care, with services configured effectively and efficiently to meet demand for both planned and unscheduled care. This also means delivering for the workforce, who are the heart of the HSC.

### **1.3.1 Chief Nursing Officer Vision and Strategic Priorities**

NIPEC plays a significant role in supporting the vision and objectives of the CNO (DoH) in the continued pursuit of excellence in the delivery of nursing and midwifery services to the population of Northern Ireland. In 2023, the Northern Ireland Chief Nursing Officer, Professor Maria McIlgorm launched her 5-year vision for nursing and midwifery in Northern Ireland, 'Shaping Our Future'.

The Vision has 4 initial key priorities as shown in Figure 1. (These are Career Pathways, Workforce/Workload Planning, Quality Assurance Framework, Education and Training). These key priorities are central to the delivery of the vision and provide strategic guidance to support health and social care organisations across Northern Ireland. This Plan reflects the organisation's commitment to delivery of the CNO Vision for Nurses and Midwives in Northern Ireland.

The Chief Executive of NIPEC is also a member of the Central Nursing and Midwifery Advisory Committee (CNMAC) which is a statutory advisory body established in 1974 under Article 24 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. Its function is to provide relevant, timely and resolved advice to the Department through the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) on matters concerning nursing and midwifery in Northern Ireland. NIPEC support this committee through the delivery of our statutory functions.

**Figure 1: Chief Nursing Officer Vision and Strategic Priorities<sup>2</sup>**




### **1.3.2 Working with the NMC**

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) exists to protect the public and has a vital role in building a safety culture that is open and fair. NIPEC's work programme is also closely aligned with the strategic policy direction of the NMC. The NMC has 2 key functions, the core function being regulation and the secondary function of supporting registered nurses and midwives along with the public. The NMC share intelligence from regulatory activities across the UK and work with partners, one of which is NIPEC, to support workforce planning and sector-wide decision making.

In January 2024, Rise Associates led by Nazir Afzal OBE were commissioned by the NMC to undertake an independent cultural review of the organisation over the last five years following a series of disclosures by a whistle-blower in 2023, who claimed that a "deep seated toxic culture" was leading to skewed and failed investigations. NIPEC continue to support the CNO and Nursing and Midwifery senior staff in considering learning from this review and any impact on registrants within Northern Ireland.

<sup>2</sup> CNO – A Vision for Nursing and Midwifery in Northern Ireland 2023-2028 <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/five-year-vision-outlined-nursing-midwifery>



NIPEC continue to work in partnership with the NMC as the independent regulator for nurses and midwives in the UK, supporting their core roles in regulation, promoting high education and professional standards. This often involves contributing to strategic decisions and developments and supporting translation into practice within Northern Ireland. An example of this partnership work in 2024/2025 is outlined in section 4.6.1.



## 2.0 What we do: NIPEC's Culture, Values and Behaviours

NIPEC is a unique professional organisation guided by a set of values that directly impacts on what we do and how we do it. As a Health and Social Care (HSC) Arm's Length Body (ALB) organisation, NIPEC's values align with those underpinning HSC strategy and delivery plans across Northern Ireland.



The values are set in a context of the requirement for all nurses and midwives to adhere to the Nursing and Midwifery Council's (NMC) Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses, Midwives and Nursing Associates<sup>3</sup>.

The HSC Values will be used as a key reference point as we seek to implement this Plan. 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 NIPEC is committed to promoting respect for diversity and to challenging sectarianism and racism in both employment and services.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/code/>

## 2.1 Focus on Quality

In NIPEC we firmly believe that in order to deliver high quality, it needs to be grounded in collaboration and truly understanding our staff and our partners. We see our partners as those who play an active part in supporting NIPEC to undertake its business, those who have an interest in what we do and who help to implement our work across the system. Figure 2 illustrates these three components.

Our partners are also those who will be affected by the changes we introduce, this could include frontline staff, senior managers and people within our communities. We want to focus our priorities around themes that will enable us to deliver excellence for the professions and allow us to learn from each other. We want to strengthen the confidence and pride in NIPEC as an organisation enabling people to lead with pride, inspiring others through our work and continuously striving to improve all that we do. In 2024 we were delighted that our Council endorsed the [NIPEC Quality Strategy](https://nipec.hscni.net/publications/quality-strategy/)<sup>4</sup> which will underpin the delivery of this Plan.

**Figure 2: Our Quality Strategic Priority Areas of Focus**



<sup>4</sup> <https://nipec.hscni.net/publications/quality-strategy/>

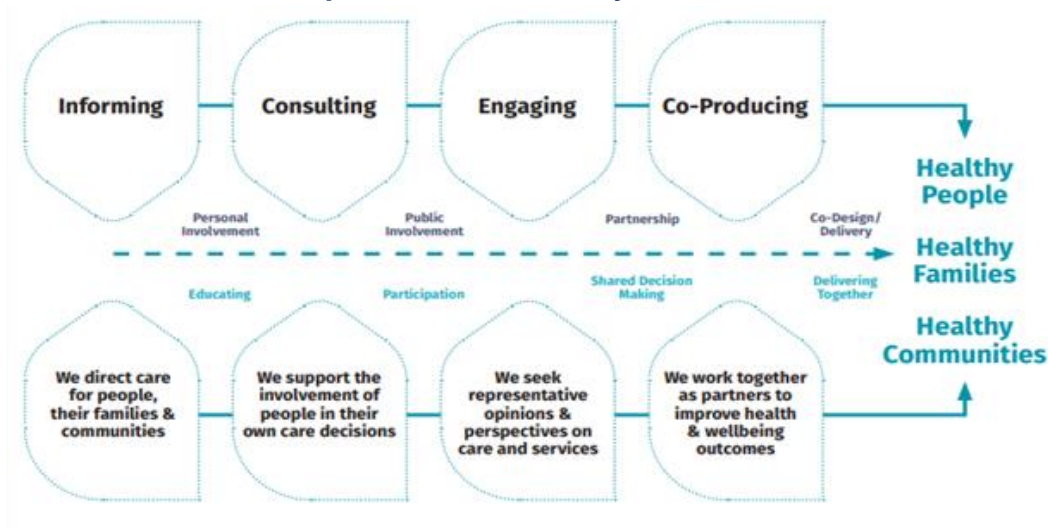
## 3.0 Working in Collaboration

### 3.1 Delivering in Partnership

The [Involvement and Co-production Strategy](#)<sup>5</sup> was endorsed by Council, late 2023. It outlines NIPEC's ongoing commitment to the engagement, promotion of people with user and lived experience, by encouraging participation in all of their programmes of work, as valued and equal stakeholders. NIPEC is steadfast in integrating partnership working at a strategic and operational level and the delivery of their daily business approach to support its functions.

This strategy is implemented through a process of employing various levels of involvement, engagement and co-production approaches. These are all part of a continuum; as outlined in the [DoH Co-production Guide Connecting and Realising Value Through People](#)<sup>6</sup> document. Figure 3 illustrates the involvement, to co-design and co-delivery process.

**Figure 3: Involvement and Co-production Pathway**



Approaches adopted by NIPEC are often influenced by the context of the work or project. Therefore, will be dependent on what is most appropriate. Good communication and engagement are essential within an involvement approach; supporting our aim for openness and transparency, how we engage with our stakeholders along with the values and principles governing our partnership activities.

The stakeholder map in Figure 4, has been developed to illustrate the breadth and the strength of our stakeholders' representation and participation within all aspects of NIPEC's work. Some of our stakeholders will be more engaged directly in the work of NIPEC than others, therefore throughout this document, the word 'stakeholders' includes our partners who are playing an active part in supporting NIPEC to undertake its business and who help to implement our work across the HSC system.

<sup>5</sup> [https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd\\_file/final-involvement-and-co-production-strategy-mar-24-2/](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/final-involvement-and-co-production-strategy-mar-24-2/)

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/HSCB-Co-Production-Guide.pdf>

Figure 4: Stakeholder Map



## 3.2 Communications

The [NIPEC Communication and Engagement Strategy: Purpose-People-Plans](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/engagement-and-communication-strategy-nipec1905-approved-19aug21/)<sup>7</sup> is driven by the [NIPEC Corporate Plan 2024-2028](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/nipec-corporate-plan-2024-28/)<sup>8</sup> and the [NIPEC Quality Strategy 2024-2028: Lead, Inspire and Improve](https://indd.adobe.com/view/9cac5f45-62f3-4498-931e-f2a798d8ec7a)<sup>9</sup>. It reflects the importance of the [Involvement and Co-production Strategy](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/final-involvement-and-co-production-strategy-mar-24-2/)<sup>10</sup>. It is vital that we communicate and engage with our stakeholders. We will develop plans to engage people with purpose.

**Figure 5: Communication and Engagement Strategy**



<sup>7</sup> [https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd\\_file/engagement-and-communication-strategy-nipec1905-approved-19aug21/](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/engagement-and-communication-strategy-nipec1905-approved-19aug21/)

<sup>8</sup> [https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd\\_file/nipec-corporate-plan-2024-28/](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/nipec-corporate-plan-2024-28/)

<sup>9</sup> <https://indd.adobe.com/view/9cac5f45-62f3-4498-931e-f2a798d8ec7a>

<sup>10</sup> [https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd\\_file/final-involvement-and-co-production-strategy-mar-24-2/](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/final-involvement-and-co-production-strategy-mar-24-2/)



## 4.0 Strategic Priorities

In fulfilling NIPEC's responsibility to promote high standards of practice among nurses and midwives during 2024-25, NIPEC continued to provide strategic leadership and implemented a proactive, flexible and responsive work programme. This included leading or facilitating regional projects and initiatives along with developing, monitoring and reviewing resources to enable improvements in professional practice.

This Plan explains what we will do this year in support of our strategic priorities. We report on how well we do in our [Annual Report](#)<sup>11</sup> which is published on our website. However, we have provided one key achievement under each Strategic Priority.




### 4.1 NIPEC's Work Programme 2025-2026

NIPEC's business objectives have been developed in partnership with our key stakeholders. The changing needs of patients, carers and communities and staff requires NIPEC to remain strategically focused, yet flexible in its approach to respond to emerging priorities as they arise throughout the year. NIPEC will continue to work closely through the Office of the CNO to secure the necessary resource to expand the portfolio of work in partnership with key stakeholders.

<sup>11</sup> [//nipec.hscni.net/publications/annual-reports-accounts/](https://nipec.hscni.net/publications/annual-reports-accounts/)

## 4.2 Strategic Priority 1: Practice



### STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: **PRACTICE**

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**OUTCOME:**

NIPEC's programme of work contributes positively to Nurses and Midwives' practice standards

**OBJECTIVE:**

**NIPEC will promote high standards of practice among nurses and midwives by:**

1. Incorporating best evidence and continuous improvement in our work at local and regional levels.
2. Sharing and disseminating best practice based on robust evidence, regionally, nationally and internationally.

**We will measure progress by:**

1. Progress and endorsement of practice improvement focused projects to agreed timescales.
2. Stakeholders' activity relating to professional participation, including feedback of their experience and assessment of the impact of the work.

The professional practice and behaviours of nurses and midwives are central to improving the health and wellbeing of the population, delivering safe, high-quality person-centred practice, improving value and ensuring equity. Nurses and midwives demonstrate improved outcomes through the use of evidence-based improvement approaches. They actively enable coproduction and decision making at all levels of care delivery, service and education provision, research and policy making. Epidemiological and demographical realities along with digitalisation of health and social care, offer real opportunities for the nursing and midwifery workforces to create and improve, innovate and transform and produce new ways of working and service models. In so doing, they uphold the standards of the professions for the good of the public.

In fulfilling NIPEC's responsibility to promote high standards of practice among nurses and midwives during 2024-2025, NIPEC continued to provide strategic leadership and implemented a proactive, flexible and responsive work programme. This included leading or facilitating regional projects and initiatives along with developing, monitoring and reviewing resources to enable improvements in professional practice.

## 4.2.1 Example of Achievement in 2024-2025

### A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery

In 2023, the CNO asked NIPEC to lead the development of a new Leadership Framework for nurses and midwives. The aim is to increase the collective leadership capacity across the HSC system at all levels, based on the concept that acts of leadership can come from anyone in an organisation and are not restricted to people who hold designated or formal leadership roles.

A Regional Project Task and Finish Group was convened by Dr Carole McKenna, NIPEC Senior Professional Officer/Project Lead and chaired by Myra Weir, Associate Consultant, HSC Leadership Centre.



Task & Finish Group: Representatives from PCC, 5 HSCTs, PHA, Primary Care, NMTG, Independent Sector, AHPs, HR Directors, CEC, QUB, OU, UU, NIMDTA, NISCC, RCM & RCN

A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery and associated Assessment Tool<sup>12</sup> were subsequently launched by the Health Minister at CNO's annual conference on 19 September 2024.

<sup>12</sup> <https://nipec.hscni.net/service/empowering-leaders-at-every-level-a-framework-for-nursing-and-midwifery/>





Launch of 'A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery' L-R: Prof Maria McIlgorm (Chief Nursing Officer), Mike Nesbitt (Health Minister), Dr Carole McKenna (Project Lead, NIPEC Senior Professional Officer), Linda Kelly (NIPEC Chief Executive)

Implementation of the Framework across the wider HSC will increase the prevalence of working across traditional boundaries to reduce or eliminate any silo-based leadership approaches, to help address the ever-increasing complexity and demands on our services.



### 4.3 Strategic Priority 1: Practice Areas of Focus for 2025 - 2026

**Outcome: NIPEC's Programme of work, contributes positively to Nurses and Midwives' practice standards**

Area of Focus	What this means
<b>Support implementation of the Quality Excellence Assurance Framework proposal</b>	NIPEC will further develop an online platform through building a library of resources and supporting the delivery model for the Quality Excellence Assurance Framework.
<b>Support the implementation of the RNLD Model as outlined in the Equity of Access and Outcome Report</b>	Following the launch of the Equity of Access and Outcomes Report last year, NIPEC will support the CNO and her team in progressing a number of recommendations outlined within the report to enable the delivery of a new model for Register Learning Disability Nurses (RNLDs) within Northern Ireland.
<b>Review and update Record Keeping Standards Guidance</b>	NIPEC will lead on a refresh for the regional record keeping standards for nursing and midwifery and will provide an up to date resource guiding nurses, midwives and their support teams, particularly as the use of digital systems expands across all sectors of health and social care.
<b>Support the Review of Delegation of Care in Practice</b>	NIPEC will support the DoH to review of current delegation model and making recommendations for the future. The aim is to enable people to live as independently as possible at home, through providing the right care, in the right place, at the right time, by the right person and supported by timely, safe and effective delegation of healthcare interventions.



<p><b>Complete an Impact Assessment for Supervision/ Preceptorship Framework</b></p>	<p>NIPEC will measure the impact of the Northern Ireland Reflective Supervision Framework and the Northern Ireland Preceptorship Framework and test if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Related to strategic objectives,</li> <li>• Having the anticipated results and</li> <li>• Demonstrate positive impacts of public investment related to supporting the nursing and midwifery professions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support Senior Nursing and Midwifery Community of Practice (CoP)</b></p>	<p>These Communities of Practice (CoPs) bring together professional staff responsible for setting and delivering the strategic agenda from across Northern Irish organisations in a regional leadership community and generate a collective energy and momentum. Valuing nursing and midwifery is important to CoP members and NIPEC will continue to facilitate these CoPs to progress these important discussions.</p>
<p><b>Support the establishment of an Advanced Practice Academy/Network</b></p>	<p>The development of a model/framework to support the formation of an Advanced Practice Academy for Nurses and Midwives in Northern Ireland will oversee agreed specific regional advanced practice projects and initiatives, promote collaborative working in a safe and supportive environment and ensure high quality education, mentorship, networking and research opportunities for its members.</p>

## 4.4 Strategic Priority 2: Education



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:**  
**EDUCATION**

**OUTCOME:**  
NIPEC's programme of work will impact positively on the standards of education for Nurses and Midwives

**OBJECTIVE:**  
**NIPEC will promote high standards of education among nurses and midwives by:**

1. Influencing and informing the design, development and delivery of education, nursing and learning and development programmes and activities based on up-to-date, evidence-based practice.
2. Contributing to the quality assurance of education, learning and development programmes and activities.

**We will measure progress by:**

1. Engagement activity with organisations to influence and develop a range of specific tools and resources to support the education, learning and development of nurses and midwives.
2. Activity relating to programmes that have been quality assured.

The NMC Code (2018) requires that nurses and midwives must “...maintain the knowledge and skills they need for safe and effective practice.” The provision of effective education and learning for nurses and midwives enables them to deliver evidence-informed care that is safe, person-centred and enhances patients’ experiences and outcomes. High-quality nursing and midwifery education therefore plays a crucial role in ensuring patients and their families receive quality person-centred care. It is important that Nurses and Midwives continue to be supported in their role by receiving ongoing education and development in order to enhance and maintain their knowledge and skills. This forms the foundation for competent and caring practitioners who demonstrate professional behaviours and values throughout professional careers.

To promote high standards of education during 2024-2025 NIPEC undertook a range of activities to assure education standards and to influence educational developments, whilst providing leadership and innovation to the learning and education activities of the NMC registrant population.

#### 4.4.1 Example of Achievement in 2024-2025

### Implementation of the NMC post registration standards for Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) and Community Nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQs)

Over 2024-2025 NIPEC led on the implementation of the NMC post-registration standards for Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) and Community Nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQs) into education and practice in Northern Ireland (NI).

**Figure 6: NMC Post-registration Standards**



These new evidenced based standards and proficiencies set out the necessary knowledge and skills, nurses and midwives will need to deliver the highest standard of specialist community and public health nursing practice, in partnership with the approved education institutions, practice learning partners and other key stakeholders. Significant work was progressed to agree regional resources and ensure systems and processes were in place for the implementation of the new standards.

An engagement and communications strategy was established between NIPEC and the HSC Trusts to ensure that they and other key partners were informed and prepared for the adoption of the new standards in September 2024. For more information on the project and outputs from this work please visit: [NI – NMC Post Registration Standards Implementation Project | NIPEC](https://nipec.hscni.net/service/ni-nmc-post-reg-stds/)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <https://nipec.hscni.net/service/ni-nmc-post-reg-stds/>



## 4.5 Strategic Priority 2: Education Areas of Focus for 2025 – 2026

**Outcome: NIPEC's Programme of work, will impact positively on the standards of education of Nurses and Midwives**

Area of Focus	What this means
<b>Quality Assure (QA) non-NMC approved education programmes using the NIPEC Quality Assurance Framework (2023)</b>	The CNO endorses a number of education programmes which were provided during 2023-2024 for Quality Assurance (QA) monitoring following proposals from the Nursing and Midwifery Education Commissioning Group. NIPEC quality assure these identified programmes using the agreed seven monitoring criteria, as outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework (NIPEC, 2023) to monitor compliance with the criteria across the identified programmes.
<b>Review current practice education arrangements in place for pre and post registration level nurses and midwives.</b>	A scoping exercise will review current practice education support arrangements in place for pre and post registration level nurses and midwives. Best practice will be explored and recommendations made to enable the most effective practice education role across all settings.
<b>Develop a Regional Learning Needs Analysis Tool and Guidance Document</b>	This Regional Learning Needs Analysis Tool will assist the HSC Trusts in applying a structured process in selecting appropriate education to meet the learning and development needs of their workforce. This Tool will take into consideration strategic, departmental and regulatory priorities and drivers, whilst ensuring service improvement, and applying governance and accountability responsibilities.
<b>Develop a Learning and Development Framework</b>	NIPEC will develop an overarching framework for nursing and midwifery to help guide the lifelong learning process and signpost supporting resources.

## 4.6 Strategic Priority 3: Professional Development



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:**

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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**OUTCOME:**

NIPEC's programme of work will impact positively on the regional professional agenda for Nurses and Midwives

**OBJECTIVE:**

**NIPEC will promote the professional development of nurses and midwives by:**

1. Influencing and informing the delivery of the CNO's strategic professional vision for nursing and midwifery based on up-to-date, evidence-based practice.
2. Informing the strategic HSC/NHS policy direction and transformation agenda through strong professional leadership in order to reflect the professional priorities for nursing and midwifery.

**We will measure progress by:**

1. Activity and outcomes relating to projects reflecting professional development and transformation.
2. Evidence of influence of nursing/midwifery priorities reflected in HSC/NHS strategic transformation.

The NMC Code (2018) requires nurses and midwives to keep their knowledge and skills up to date, take part in appropriate and regular learning and professional development activities that aim to maintain and develop competence and improve performance.

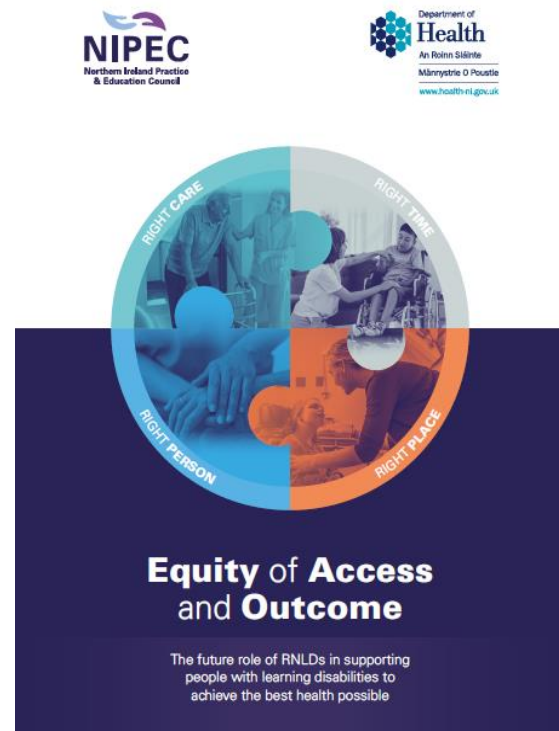
To fulfil NIPEC's responsibility to promote the professional development of nurses and midwives, during 2024 - 2025 and in partnership with key stakeholders, NIPEC led or supported the development of a number of career pathways for nursing and midwifery professions.



## 4.6.1 Example of Achievement in 2024-2025

### Registered Nurse Learning Disability (RNLD) Workforce Model

On behalf of the CNO, NIPEC's Chief Executive co-chaired a Regional Strategic Workforce Development Group with the Executive Director of Nursing, Northern HSC Trust, along with key stakeholders and Consultant Nurses in Learning Disabilities. The purpose was to design a workforce model to ensure the availability of a suitably skilled and resourced registrant workforce across primary, secondary and specialist health and social care service in Northern Ireland, in line with the strategic direction. The Equity of Access and Outcome Report, outlining the future role of Registered Nurses Learning Disability (RNLDs) was launched in November 2024 by the CNO. The intended outcome of this is to enable nurses to support people with learning disabilities to achieve their full health and wellbeing potential.



*Launch of the Equality of Access and Outcome Report*



#### 4.7 Strategic Priority 3: Professional Development Areas of Focus for 2025 - 2026


**Outcome: NIPEC's Programme of work, will impact positively on the regional professional agenda for Nurses and Midwives**

Area of Focus	What this means
<b>Review and establish a Career Model for Nursing and Midwifery in Northern Ireland</b>	A review of the Northern Ireland Career Framework/Model will help nurses and midwives, and those aspiring to these roles, to understand and plan career opportunities and journey. It will include a learning and development framework and tools/resources to help identify interests, competencies, values and goals as well as challenges and potential barriers along the way.
<b>Lead Perioperative Career Pathway</b>	A career pathway for perioperative nursing, comprising eight key core roles, will be developed for consideration in all Health and Social Care Trust perioperative settings across Northern Ireland. This will maximise the potential of the nursing workforce, including support staff, by ensuring stability and providing meaningful career progression opportunities.
<b>Lead Cancer Nursing Career Pathway</b>	NIPEC will develop a cancer nursing career pathway to support the development of registered nursing staff and clinical support staff, who care for people living with cancer from a range of care settings, including: Acute Medicine, Acute Surgery, Primary and Community Care, cancer centres, cancer units and the Independent Sector. It will also include, all nurses caring for people across the life span: children, teenagers, young adults as well as adults.

<b>Develop Career Pathway for Nurses in Nursing Homes</b>	NIPEC will develop a career pathway and core competencies will be developed and considered for registered nurses working in Nursing Care Homes in Northern Ireland.
<b>Promote access to education and leadership opportunities for Ethnically Diverse (global majority) workforces</b>	Through a staff and organisational survey, NIPEC will monitor and review progress by HSC Trusts and Northern Irish Universities promoting access to education and leadership opportunities for ethnically diverse workforces. In addition, host an annual Regional Ethnic Diversity Workshop.
<b>Review model for Mental Health Nursing to inform new model going forward</b>	NIPEC will support a partnership approach with a wide range of stakeholders to develop a new person, family, community and population centred model for mental health nursing practice in Northern Ireland.
<b>Develop a Career Framework for Registered Nurses</b>	NIPEC will develop a regionally proposed Framework for Registered Nurses outlining competencies and educational requirements enabling high standards of care. This Framework aims to provide consistency, structure, guidance and direction in relation to career progression.



## 4.8: Strategic Priority 4: Guidance, Advice and Information



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:**

# **GUIDANCE, ADVICE & INFORMATION**

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**OUTCOME:**

NIPEC will be a valuable resource of professional advice and information for Northern Ireland

**OBJECTIVE:**

**NIPEC will provide guidance, advice and information on best practice and matters relating to nursing and midwifery by:**

1. Interpreting, translating and supporting the implementation of relevant legislation and policy relating to all aspects of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives.
2. Acting as a professional resource for decision-making.

**We will measure progress by:**

1. Evidence of influence of the nursing and midwifery agenda in strategic policy and legislation.
2. Activity and influence reflected in replies to consultations, advice to individuals and organisations.

The NMC Code requires nurses and midwives to “make sure that any information or advice given is evidence-based, including information relating to using any healthcare products or services.” This care must be delivered within an organisational environment that promotes evidence-based practice and utilises effective risk management processes.

In 2024 - 2025 NIPEC continued to fulfil its unique role in Northern Ireland by providing guidance on best practice and matters relating to nursing and midwifery. NIPEC’s websites and online facilities provided practitioners and organisations with information to support the delivery of safe and effective person-centred care. NIPEC’s Senior Communications Officer has facilitated the organisation to enhance the profile of its projects and completed work programmes ensuring nurses, midwives and support staff are kept up to date with resources to support their practice, education and professional development.



#### **4.8.1 Example of Achievement in 2024-2025**

Our websites are used to promote the work of NIPEC, to inform and update stakeholders and to provide resources for staff across health and social care, independent and voluntary sector and education. The NIPEC main site will be relaunched in Spring 2025 with enhanced navigation and accessibility. We will continue to make evidence-based improvements to the websites.

NIPEC will continue to respond to regional and other consultations on emerging strategies and policies. On accession responding on behalf of the nursing and midwifery community in HSCNI.





## 4.9 Strategic Priority 4: Guidance, Advice and Information Areas of Focus for 2025 - 2026

**Outcome: NIPEC will be a valuable resource of professional advice and information for Northern Ireland**

Area of Focus	What this means
<b>Support the professional regional agenda through responding to relevant Consultations</b>	NIPEC will respond as an organisation or on behalf of the Central Nursing and Midwifery Council to relevant consultations that impact on the health and well being of our population and/or the nursing and midwifery workforce.
<b>Represent Nursing and Midwifery Professions: Regionally, Nationally and Internationally</b>	NIPEC provide a key role in representing the professions of Nursing and Midwifery at regional, national and international events, ensuring the opportunity to contribute and learn from others.
<b>Provide a professional resource for registrants within Northern Ireland through access to advice, best practice/evidence-based resources and information.</b>	NIPEC provide an advice and supportive role on professional best practice issues. This year we are updating our website to make it more accessible for our registrants and enable interaction with our Team.

## 5.0 Governance and Performance

There is little doubt that 2025-2026 will prove to be a challenging year across HSC in terms of a constrained financial climate and in that context, NIPEC will strive to meet our core statutory functions. The Corporate Team will continue to play its role in the achievement of the objectives set out in this Plan which are aligned to our [Corporate Plan 2024-28](#)<sup>14</sup>

While acknowledging the challenges faced by the HSC, including financial pressures, political uncertainty and workforce retention, NIPEC's Corporate Plan 2024-28 focuses on the organisation's priorities of supporting nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland to deliver improved access to better health and social care services for the Northern Irish public. The Plan was developed with our stakeholders and provides clarity around our strategic direction and goals for our stakeholders over the 4 years.

The Corporate Team ensure high quality and appropriate governance arrangements and processes are in place to support the delivery of NIPEC's functions. In 2025-26, one of the key priorities for the team will be the development of a new 5-year Equality Scheme for the organisation which will come into effect in June 2026.

Accountability for the achievement of objectives in the Corporate and Business Plans is set out in NIPEC's Performance Management Framework which was reviewed and approved by our Council in December 2024. The document describes Council's oversight of performance management and the reporting arrangements for various elements of performance by the organisation.

The Annual Business Plan will be monitored quarterly and update reports across all objectives will be provided to NIPEC Council and its Committees. The Business (BTM) and Professional Teams (PTM) will be collectively responsible for ensuring the objectives and associated KPIs are achieved. Where actions are not on target to deliver, these will be considered by the senior team and mitigating actions agreed to ensure maximum progress is made by March 2026.

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<sup>14</sup> [https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd\\_file/nipec-corporate-plan-2024-28/](https://nipec.hscni.net/wpfd_file/nipec-corporate-plan-2024-28/)

## 6.0 Key Objectives

Please note that performance against objectives for 2024-25 can be found in the Annual Report & Accounts 2025-25


	Objectives/Timescales	We Will Deliver These Objectives by: Actions	We Will Measure This By: Outcomes
5A	Continue to maintain a robust governance and accountability framework through the effective management and monitoring of corporate and financial performance, considering DoH requirements and timescales. <b>Timescale: 31 March 2026</b>	Reporting of performance to Council meetings, Audit & Risk Committees, Sponsor Branch and Ground Clearing/Accountability meetings	Uncertified Annual Report/ Governance Statement and Accounts  All meetings take place and are quorate
5B	Comply with HSC corporate governance, legislative requirements and best practice through risk management, internal controls systems and external assurance processes. <b>Timescale: 31 March 2026</b>	Annual Internal Audit Plan  External Audit  Audit & Risk Committees x 4 per annum	Satisfactory Compliance with Internal Audits  Uncertified Annual Report/ Governance Statement and Accounts  All take place and are quorate
5C	Achieve the financial breakeven target of <b>0.25% or £20k</b> (whichever is the greater) of revenue allocation by the financial year end. <b>Timescale: 31 March 2026</b>	Monthly meetings with BSO Finance  Submission of monthly FMR  Financial reporting to each	Uncertified Annual Accounts

	Objectives/Timescales	We Will Deliver These Objectives by: Actions	We Will Measure This By: Outcomes
		Council and Audit & Risk Committee	
5D	<p>Continue to ensure that a suitable skills base is maintained in regard to business cases and for capital, external consultancy/ revenue business cases. Continue to ensure that they comply with relevant guidance and that submission to DoH is in line with agreed timeframes.</p> <p><b>Timescale: During 2025-26</b></p>	Completion of Business Cases and PPEs in line with guidance	Results of bi-annual 'testing' of completion of business cases/PPEs by DoH Finance
5E	<p>Produce a Business Plan for 2026-27, taking account of any targets/outcomes set by the DoH.</p> <p><b>Timescale: 31 March 2026</b></p>	Develop a Business Plan in line with the Corporate Plan 2024-28 and in consultation with Council, Sponsor Branch and key stakeholders	Approval of Business Plan by DoH Sponsor Branch
5F	<p>To monitor and maintain staff absence rates below the DoH target.</p> <p><b>Timescale: During 2025-26</b></p>	<p>Standing agenda item at Business Team, Council and Audit &amp; Risk Committees</p> <p>Consult with HR if rate higher than target</p>	<p>Achievement of the target</p> <p>Outcome included in Annual Report</p>
5G	<p>Meet NIPEC's Equality and Disability Legislative requirements including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commence the development of a new 5-year Equality Scheme 2026-31 (Final Scheme to be approved by Council by June 2026)</li> <li>Timescale: October 2025 – March 2026</li> <li>Monitor year 2 actions within NIPEC's Equality and Disability Action</li> </ul>	<p>Working with BSO Equality Unit, NIPEC Council, staff and stakeholders.</p> <p>Draft report to be approved by</p>	<p>Presentation of a first draft Equality Scheme 2026-31 to Council in March 2026.</p> <p>Approval of Equality</p>



	Objectives/Timescales	We Will Deliver These Objectives by: Actions	We Will Measure This By: Outcomes
	Plans 2024-28, reporting progress to the Equality Commission NI (ECNI). <b>Timescale: During 2025-26</b>	Business Team and Council Submitted to ECNI by 31 <sup>st</sup> August	Commission Northern Ireland
5H	<p>Ensure compliance with the DoH processes and timescales for the completion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-year Assurance Statement <b>Timescale: October 2025</b></li> <li>End of year Governance Statement for 2024-25 <b>Timescale: 31 March 2026</b></li> <li>Board Governance self-assessment Tool <b>Timescale: 31 March 2026</b></li> <li>NIAO Audit Committee Checklist <b>Timescale: 31 August 2025</b></li> </ul>	<p>Present to Audit &amp; Risk Committee October 2025</p> <p>Present to Audit &amp; Risk Committee May &amp; June 2025</p> <p>Draft to be reviewed by Council Actions to be agreed for 2025-26</p> <p>Completed by HoCS. Any mitigating actions to be included in Governance Statement/Board self-assessment</p>	<p>Ratification by DoH</p> <p>Uncertified Opinion by External Audit</p> <p>Successful Completion of previous year's actions</p> <p>Satisfactory Independent Review: 3-yearly</p> <p>Successful Completion of previous year's actions</p>

	Objectives/Timescales	We Will Deliver These Objectives by: Actions	We Will Measure This By: Outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sponsor Branch meetings, plus DoH mid-year and end of year accountability review meetings.</li> </ul> <b>Timescale: During 2025-26</b>	Timetable for meetings to be agreed	All take place and are quorate
5J	<p>To achieve the prompt payment targets for the payments of invoices of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95% for 30 days.</li> <li>70% for 10 days.</li> </ul> <b>Timescale: 31 March 2026</b>	<p>Standing agenda item at Business Team, Council and Audit &amp; Risk Committees</p> <p>Take mitigating action if not meeting target including liaison with Payments Shared Service</p>	<p>Achievement of the target</p> <p>Outcome included in Performance Section of Annual Report &amp; Accounts 2025-26</p>
5K	<p>Property and Accommodation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asset Management Plan 2025-26 to 2029-30.</li> </ul> <b>Timescale: December 2025</b>	<p>Prepare draft PAMP and seek approval from Business Team</p> <p>Submit to DoH Property Management Branch in line with timescales set down</p>	Approval of Plan by DoH
5L	<p>NIPEC Quality Strategy 2024 - 2028.</p> <p>NIPEC will continue to implement the priorities set out within the Quality Strategy - <i>Lead, Inspire &amp; Improve</i></p> <b>Timescale: Throughout 2024-25</b>	<p>NIPEC will: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on our staff and our partners through listening and understanding what really matters to them using a range of surveys</li> </ul>	Approval by DoH of NIPEC's Annual Quality Report



	Objectives/Timescales	We Will Deliver These Objectives by: Actions	We Will Measure This By: Outcomes
		<p>and conversations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to build relationships with our partners and work to improve how we collaborate with them</li><li>• Deliver the Annual Quality Report for 2024/25 ensuring publication in November 2025.</li><li>• Continue to work on the development of a dashboard for our quality measures</li></ul>	

## 7.0 Sustainability

In June 2022, Northern Ireland obtained its first regional level climate change legislation. The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (the Act) sets a clear statutory target of net zero emissions by 2050. It places a statutory duty on all Government departments to exercise their functions in a manner that is consistent with achieving that target as far as possible.

The legislation requires that each Department will monitor and report on progress made in its area of responsibility, in implementing the proposals and policies set out in the Climate Action Plan. Departments will gather baseline data and measure the impact of actions taken. NIPEC is committed to protecting the environment and actively contributing to those areas which we can influence.

The move to our accommodation in James House in 2022 and adoption of a hybrid-working model are steps towards achieving this and a number of positive steps have been implemented:

- NIPEC's Council and Committee papers were previously printed and distributed however this practice has been replaced by the purchase of licenses for an online platform, Decision Time;
- Agile working is now in place with staff working a combination of at home and office-based. This has reduced the need for travel to the workplace and online meetings remain in use;
- Waste in James House is segregated into categories and disposed of accordingly;
- Key corporate and professional documents were previously printed in hard copy and distributed however these are now largely produced in electronic version and made available online; and
- Staff are encouraged not to print documents where possible but instead to email documents to group participants. NIPEC has also trialled the use of SharePoint for facilitating project groups with resources being uploaded to a secure site rather than printed and distributed. We plan to roll this out further in 2025-26.

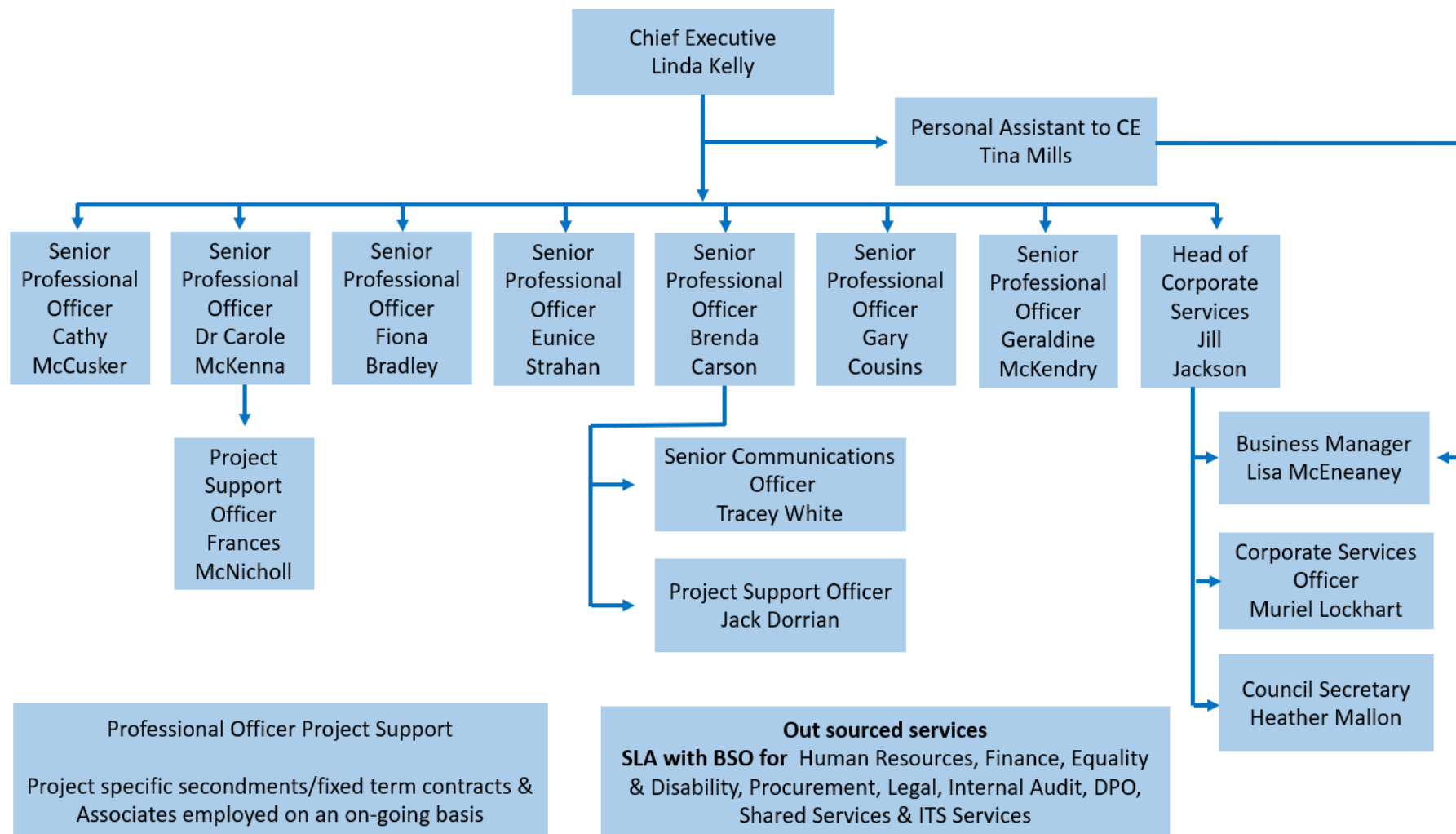




## 8.0 Equality Statement

This Business Plan will be screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Equality Commission guidance states that the purpose of screening is to identify those policies which are likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity so that greatest resources can be devoted to these. Using the Equality Commission's screening criteria, no significant equality implications have been identified and the Business Plan will not therefore be subject to an equality impact assessment.

## Appendix 1 – NIPEC Organisational Chart





## Appendix 2 Abbreviations

<b>ALBs</b>	Arms Length Bodies
<b>BSO</b>	Business Services Organisation
<b>CNO</b>	Chief Nursing Officer
<b>DoH</b>	Department of Health
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation
<b>HSC</b>	Health and Social Care
<b>LNA</b>	Learning Needs Analysis
<b>MSW</b>	Maternity Support Worker
<b>NIPEC</b>	Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery
<b>NMC</b>	Nursing and Midwifery Council
<b>PHA</b>	Public Health Agency
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QI</b>	Quality Improvement
<b>SPPG</b>	Strategic Planning & Performance Group



## **Alternative Formats**

NIPEC is committed to making information as accessible as possible and to promoting meaningful engagement with those who use our services.

This document can be made available on request and where reasonably practicable in an alternative format.

Should you wish to request a copy of this document in an alternative format please contact NIPEC.

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