

# 2024/25

# Annual Quality Report

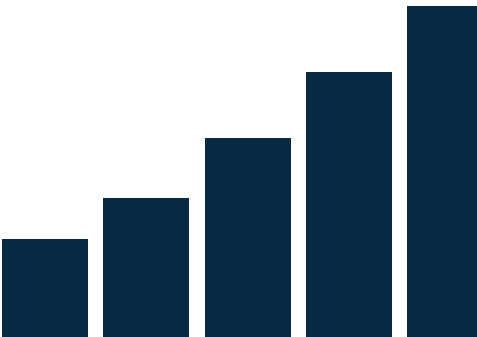




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# Foreward

It gives us great pleasure to share the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council's (NIPEC's) Annual Quality Report 24/25 with you. This report enables us to be held to account by the public for the work we do considering quality in its broadest sense

This year has been an exciting one for NIPEC with the launch of our Quality Strategy: Lead, Inspire, Improve and we would like to take this opportunity to share that our commitment to quality is stronger than ever. The strategy sets out our ambitions for quality in a way that is designed to be meaningful to our staff and our partners ensuring we work together to deliver excellence in all that we do and enhance our organisational learning. The strategy will support the delivery of the Corporate Plan over the next four years.

Quality 2020 underpins NIPEC activity and throughout this report we will share examples of the collaborative efforts of our dedicated staff and outline the progress we have made over the last year across many different areas. This includes the launch at the Chief Nursing Officers (CNO) conference of both the Collective Leadership Framework for Nurses and Midwives along with the Maternity Support Worker (MSW) Standards and Education Competency Framework.

As Chair and Chief Executive our commitment to you is that we will strive to continuously improve and deliver all that we set out within our Quality Strategy. I hope you enjoy reading more about our achievements of 2024/25.



**BRONAGH SCOTT**

CHAIR



**PROF LINDA KELLY**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

# An Introduction to NIPEC

The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing & Midwifery (NIPEC) was established through primary legislation as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) in 2002. The work of NIPEC reflects the requirements set out by the regulatory body for nurses and midwives, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), which is articulated in The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses and Midwives (NMC, 2018)[1].

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

Our commitment to quality is reflecting how we deliver the four statutory responsibilities which include:

The promotion of:

- 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 provision of

- guidance, advice and information on matters relating to nursing and midwifery.



**Practice**



**Education**



**Professional  
Development**



**Guidance, Advice  
and Information**

[1] Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2018). The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates. London: NMC. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf>





NIPEC's vision '*Leading and inspiring nurses and midwives to achieve and uphold excellence in professional practice*' articulates clearly our commitment to achieving high quality as a priority for our organisation. The vision was originally informed through a series of engagement events with our stakeholders, including the public, demonstrating how we value partnership working with staff, patients, clients and carers. That means that our vision has been defined by the people with whom, and for whom, we work. NIPEC has occupied office space in the Department of Finance (DoF) owned and managed James House since 6 February 2023.

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 promote respect for diversity and challenge sectarianism and racism in both employment and services.





## **Maintaining Quality within Governance arrangements**

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

NIPEC reports on the quality of its performance through production of its Annual Report and Accounts, Annual Quality Report and bi-annual Accountability Reviews with the DoH. NIPEC applies the principles of good practice in Corporate Governance and continues to strengthen its governance arrangements. This is achieved by undertaking continuous assessment of its compliance with Corporate Governance best practice by assessing NIPEC Council's Governance arrangements against the Department of Health's Governance annual self-assessment tool. This ensures continual improvement in governance and best practice by focusing on the following four key areas:

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

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 as quality is a standing item on the agenda of Council meetings, Business Team and Professional Team meetings.

NIPEC 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.

## NIPEC Council

NIPEC Council is made up of a Chair and eleven professional and lay members who are responsible for ensuring that robust governance structures and systems are in place to monitor accountability and performance within the organisation. These structures provide assurance that the contribution of the organisation fits strategically and operationally in support of care delivery across Health and Social Care (HSC).



NIPEC Council Members 2024/25

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

The Council engages regularly with key stakeholders to ensure that the work of the NIPEC is co-produced. It maximises every opportunity to share and seek feedback on the work and performance of the organisation. NIPEC council members also participate in a number of development days throughout the year. The topics are chosen in conjunction with the members in order to enhance their roles as council members. The enthusiasm and dedication of our Council members along with our staff, partners and stakeholders is inspirational and without their hard work and commitment we would not be able to deliver on the outcomes evidenced in this report.



NIPEC Council Development Day June 2024



# NIPEC's Quality Strategy: Lead, Inspire, Improve



In line with the Quality 2020 principles, NIPEC agrees that quality is everyone's 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.



In November 2024 NIPEC launched a new Quality Strategy: Lead, Inspire & Improve, that sets out the vision to create a culture where our commitment to Quality is demonstrated through inspiring our staff and our partners to deliver excellence across the professions by promoting high standards of practice, education and professional development.

Through the development of the strategy over a four-year period we will strive to achieve successful outcomes through using continuous improvement, creating opportunities to be innovative and to learn together.

Through this strategy NIPEC defines Quality as: **“Meeting and exceeding the expectations of our staff and our partners and continuing to improve”**

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.

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 (See figure 1) 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 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.

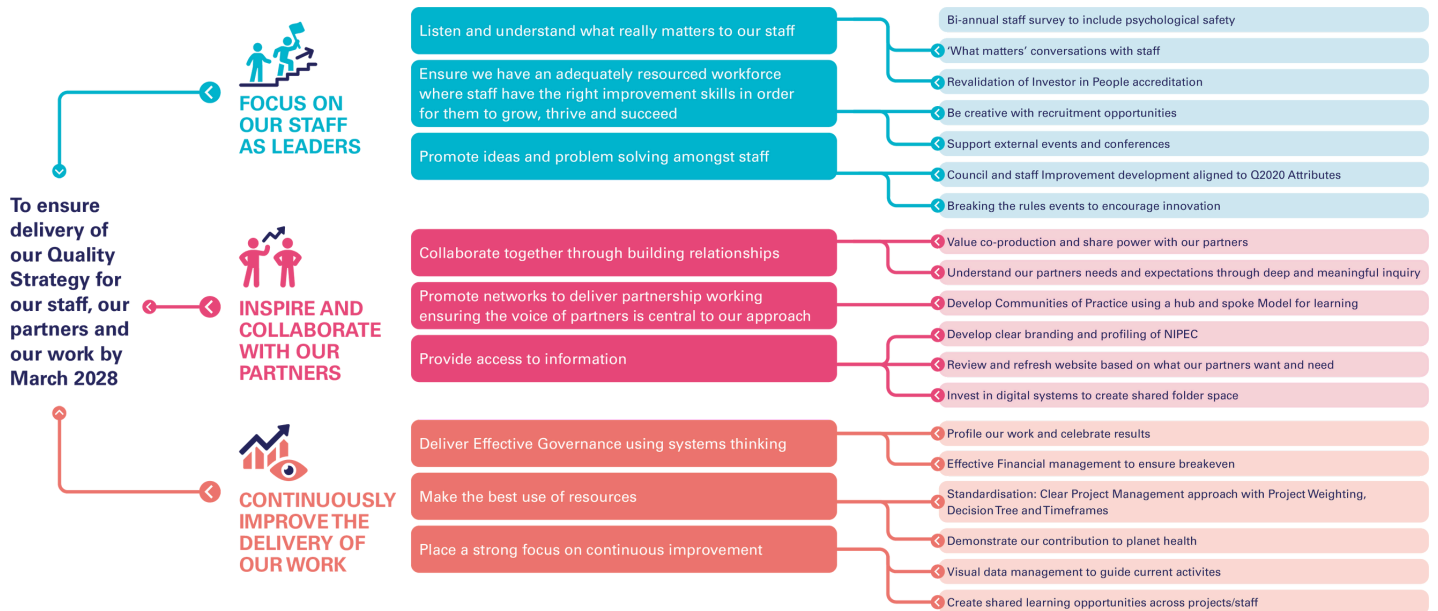
**Figure 1 : Our Priorities**



Our priorities set out within this strategy will focus on our staff as leaders, inspiring and collaborating with our partners and continuously improving the delivery of our work. We will use a range of measures to demonstrate the success of the strategy ensuring they are meaningful and support delivery of our corporate priorities. Further detail on these can be found in the section titled 'Our Work'. The Driver Diagram in Figure 2 sets out our plan on a page for how we will deliver the strategy



**Figure 2: NIPEC Quality Strategy Driver Diagram**



To access our Quality Strategy please click on the link [NIPEC Quality Strategy 2024 to 2028](#).

This year we have laid out our Annual Quality Report a little differently, aligning to the priorities set out in our strategy but ensuring we continue to incorporate the Quality 2020 themes to maintain consistency with other organisations.



# Our Staff

our staff

NIPEC is a unique professional organisation that comprises of a Chief Executive supported by a senior team of seven Senior Professional Officers, a Head of Corporate Services and a number of administrative support staff. NIPEC staff are our most valuable resource. As a person-centred organisation, NIPEC is guided by a set of values that underpin all we do and how we do it. Central to the delivery of our corporate objectives is a strong team ethos and a culture of positivity, engagement and open communication. In this section you can read about how the team work together and also how we engage with others regionally, nationally and internationally.

Throughout 2024/25 NIPEC has continued investing in people, building a diverse team supporting the delivery of key business objectives. NIPEC is now recruited to 15 staff (14.8 WTE) with no vacant posts. NIPEC's workforce model includes a range of associates who bring specific expertise to support ongoing programmes of work.

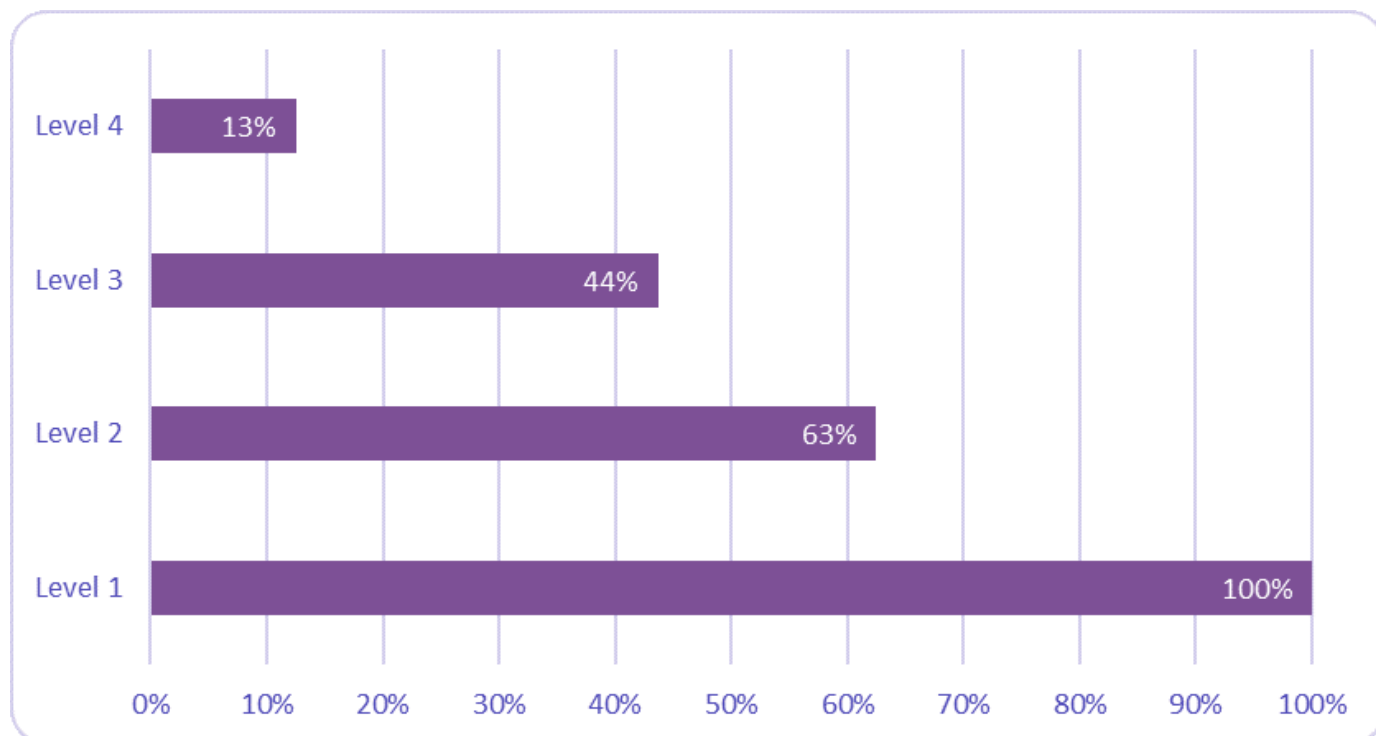


NIPEC team 2024/25

Embedded within NIPEC is a robust system of staff development and performance reviews to ensure staff have access to the right education, training and support to deliver a high- quality service. Individual roles, responsibilities and objectives are clear, regularly discussed and included in staff annual personal development meetings with their line manager to ensure high quality outcomes. NIPEC aspires to achieve high quality in everything we do requiring our staff to be innovative, creative and have a focus on improvement on a daily basis. Over the past number of years NIPEC have prioritised building capacity and capability in Quality Improvement skills across the workforce as seen in Figure 3 below, with all staff having completed the Quality2020 level 1 training, 63% level 2 and 44% level 3 by the end of March 25.

A number of staff are planning to continue their development to achieve the level 2 and level 3 certificates over the coming year.

**Figure 3: NIPEC staff trained against Q2020 Attributes**



## Staff Health and Wellbeing

Throughout 2024/25, NIPEC's Health and Wellbeing Committee sought to nurture and improve staff relationships and support staff to improve their health and wellbeing. The Committee comprises of members who volunteer to join from both corporate and professional staff. The focus throughout the year has been on social, financial, physical and mental wellbeing. A number of team activity events took place over the year enabling the team to connect and thrive with renewed energy and resilience including:

- Annual Team Building event which focused on how we can work better together as a team and create a sense of belonging
- Team 'Huddle': a weekly meeting which lasts for 60 minutes and provides an opportunity to brief colleagues on upcoming organisational priorities and anticipated pressure points
- Participation in the NIPEC Staff Survey focusing on both psychological safety and how we work as a team

Improved working relationships, morale and team working are all by-products of ensuring we have effective internal communication. Regular internal briefings, staff Microsoft teams channel and informal face to face updates are all utilised to ensure staff remain up to date. Staff meet frequently to share information, provide updates and seek feedback on issues affecting the organisation and to celebrate achievements. Internal meetings are held on a regular basis, which involve and inform staff.

The Chief Executive also holds regular 1:1 meetings with members of the senior team to ensure the work of NIPEC is progressing on time and to assure the quality of the projects that are being undertaken.

## External Engagement Activity

A key function of the team within NIPEC is to engage with partners and stakeholders in order to raise awareness about NIPEC's projects and related resources, gain consensus and ensure that outputs are relevant, facilitate translation and implementation into practice, and hence raise standards and quality. 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 partners and key stakeholders, to assist them in addressing current and future challenges.

Below please see a number of examples of the engagement work undertaken by NIPEC's Senior Professional Officers (SPO)



Geraldine McKendry (SPO)  
Mental Health & Learning  
Disability Nursing Careers  
at Parliament Buildings  
Oct 24



Cathy McCusker (SPO)  
'You, Me, and  
#PalliativeCare' event! 🙋  
Sept 24



Fiona Bradley (SPO)  
Presentation to 3rd year  
Ulster University nursing  
students

Instead of hosting an annual conference in 2024/25, NIPEC reached out to each of the HSC Trusts' Executive Directors of Nursing and met senior nursing and midwifery teams and frontline nurses, through individual Trust hosted events. In addition, NIPEC's Chief Executive offered targeted stakeholder engagement along with the NIPEC team, to provide updates on regional programmes of work and NIPEC resources. NIPEC will continue with its commitment to the development, production and dissemination of evidence-based, quality and accessible information.



In November 2024 NIPEC staff facilitated a visit from Nonie Rickard, a Director of Nursing based in Austin Hospital, Sydney, Australia. The visit was in support of a scholarship with the purpose to explore patient safety and falls prevention within the construct of person-centred care. Nonie was also interested to hear of some of the work in development within NIPEC in particular the Quality Excellence Framework for nursing and midwifery. This led to discussions around the delivery of person-centred care and the development of nurse sensitive indicators of care. During the visit Nonie also got to spend some time with staff in South Eastern HSC Trust (SEHST) who kindly shared some of the initiatives they were developing around falls reduction.



Nonie Rickard and Brenda Carson (NIPEC) visit to SEHST

As a person-centred organisation NIPEC seeks to develop and model excellent teamwork via our ethos and our activities. Whilst NIPEC is a relatively small organisation our aim is to provide an effective and efficient service to our partners and stakeholders and our imis continuously seeking opportunities to engage with others and to continue to develop professionally as individuals. Examples of this can be seen in the photos below:



## Health Improvement Alliance Europe

Along with supporting events at a regional level NIPEC continues to expand its connections globally with its ongoing involvement in the Health Improvement Alliance Europe (HIAE). In the Autumn of 2024, year 9 of the HIAE began with its first meeting in Belfast. The themes over the 2-day event were focused on

- Advancing technology in health and healthcare
- Capacity and capability building for health and healthcare improvement

Attendees also had the opportunity to learn from some of the work taking place across Northern Ireland through a number of site visits.



We connected with other Health Improvement Alliance Members and learned from some of the amazing work taking place across the region during the site visits.



The second meeting took place in Wales during which the attendees heard about the National Clinical Framework, engaged in creative workshops and took a deep dive into health inequalities and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. There was also an opportunity to focus on workforce retention featuring insights from a number of clinical leaders. There are many benefits of being a member of the alliance but mostly centred around networking opportunities and learning how different health systems are tackling similar problems and making improvements to the safety and quality of care.

# Our Partners

NIPEC has a unique role in developing resources and tools that support staff at all levels across both HSC, Independent and Voluntary organisations. The overarching aim of these developments is to support and take forward transformational change, promote best practices and share knowledge across the system. NIPEC has a culture of being at the forefront of leadership and innovation within the nursing and midwifery professions in Northern Ireland but we could not do this without the input from our partners. Below you will find some examples of work undertaken during 2024/25 that demonstrate how we work in partnership with others





## Exploring Sustainable Education Models to Support Delivery of the Regional Maternity Support Workers Programme and Career Progression in Northern Ireland (2024)

At the request of the Chief Midwifery Officer (CMO), NIPEC undertook a review to identify alternative models and infrastructure to support the full delivery of the Maternity Support Workers (MSW) education programme. This work also aimed to enhance career progression opportunities for MSWs across Northern Ireland.

The project was conducted between April 2023 and December 2024, during which various options were explored to establish a sustainable model with robust governance and accountability structures. The aim was to future proof the MSW education programme and to facilitate professional development for MSWs.

As a result of this exploratory work, several key improvements have been implemented to strengthen the operational management of the programme:

- Appointment of a nominated midwife: Each HSC Trust now has a designated midwife to support trainee MSWs, working collaboratively with the SHSCT Vocational Workforce Assessment teaching team.
- Secured recurrent funding: Funding has been secured for a second Peripatetic Assessor to assist in teaching, supervision and assessment of the regional MSW education programme.
- Ongoing support from the HSC Clinical Education Centre (CEC): The CEC has committed to providing continuous support for the MSW programme.
- Upskilling of existing MSWs: MSWs across HSC Trusts will be upskilled in two new clinical competencies to enhance their scope of practice.
- Continued oversight by the regional MSW Group: This group will continue to provide governance and oversight of the education programme and its supporting infrastructure

The DoH also initiated a review to explore opportunities for widening access to healthcare support staff, including MSWs.

In agreement with the CMO, NIPEC has successfully completed all assigned tasks related to the MSW programme. The regionally agreed MSW resources have now been transferred to the DoH and the HSC Trusts for continued implementation.

The new MSW Standards were officially launched in September 2024 by the Minister of Health and the Chief Midwifery Officer (CNO). These standards have since been adopted across all HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland.





# A Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery

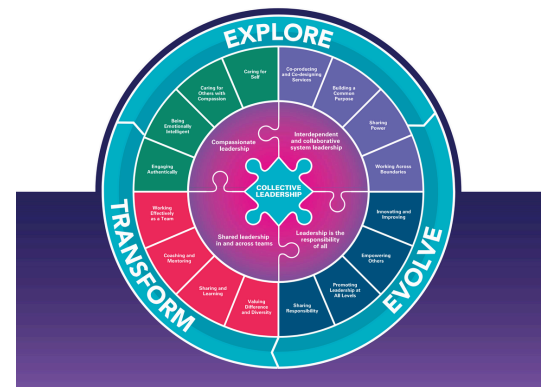
our partners

Various strategies and reports in NI over the past ten years have highlighted the need for staff to work across traditional boundaries to address the ever-increasing complexity and demands on our services (DoH, 2016; DoH 2017; Workforce Strategy). This includes the need to increase the prevalence of collective leadership and reduce or eliminate any silo-based leadership approaches, both within our organisations and across the wider HSC system. It is therefore important to ensure that the collective voice of our staff is valued and listened to in all decision-making conversations.

Furthermore, the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report (DoH, 2020), focuses on the importance of leadership and includes a specific recommendation to develop a new leadership framework along with investment in training for nurses and midwives at all levels.



## A COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY



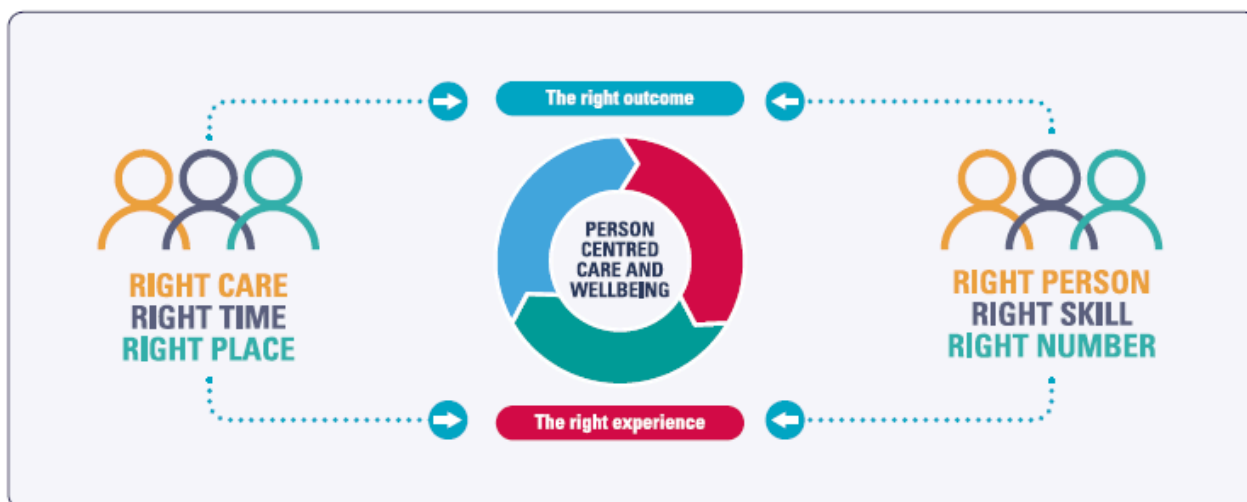
### Strategic Theme 3 Recommendation:

“develop and prepare nurses and midwives for leadership positions. This will require investment in the development of a new nurse leadership framework and investment in leadership training for nurses and midwives”

NMTG Report (DoH, 2020)

Ultimately, it is the ambition of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group that all nurses and midwives deliver the right evidence-based care, with the right numbers, at the right time, in the right place, by the right person with the right knowledge, delivering the right experience and outcomes for persons, families and communities (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: The ambition of the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group**

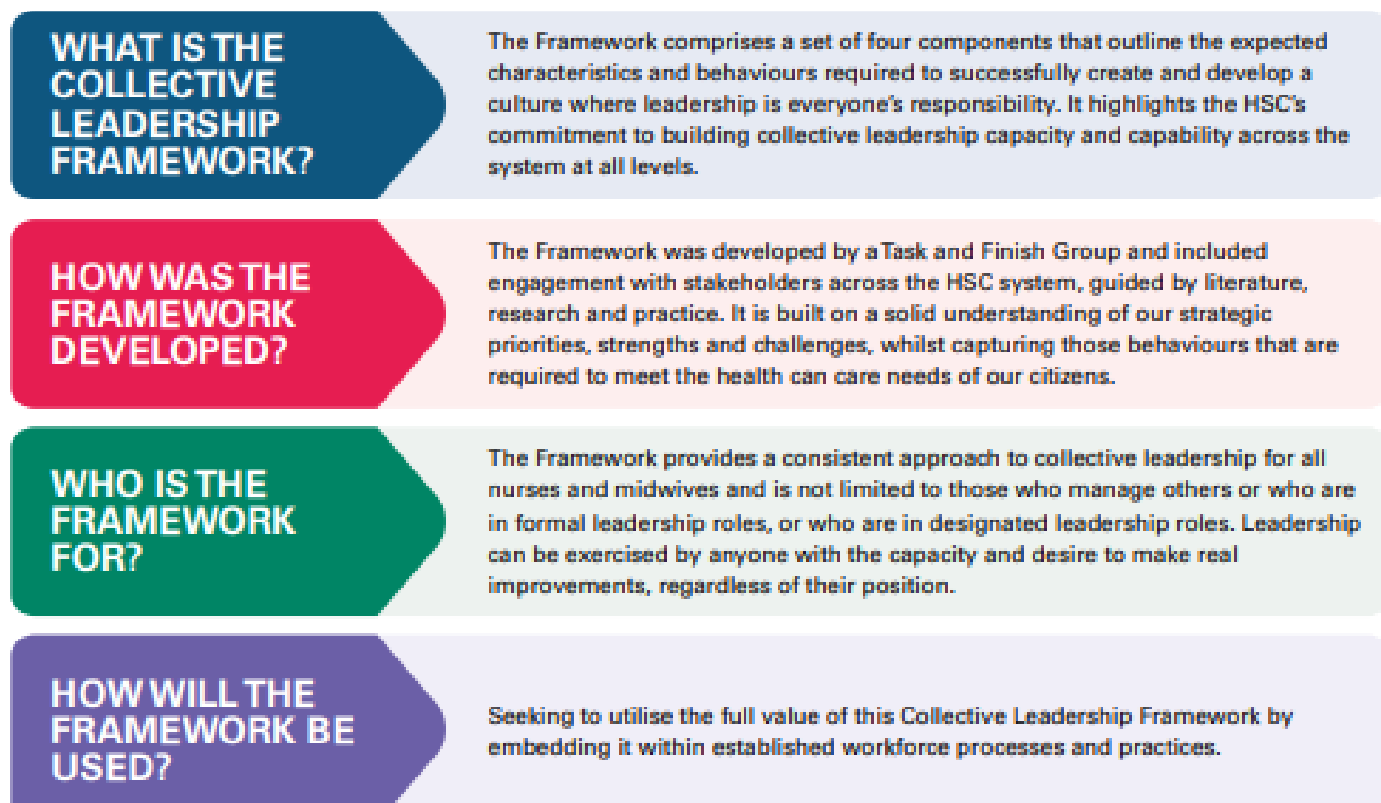


To support the above, the CNO asked NIPEC to lead a programme of work to develop a leadership framework aimed at strengthening the professional leadership of nursing and midwifery at every level and enhance the culture of collective leadership within the health and social care system in NI.

To progress this, a Task and Finish Group was convened by Dr Carole McKenna, NIPEC Senior Professional Officer and Chaired by Myra Weir, Associate Consultant from the HSC Leadership Centre. Representation included representation from HSC Trusts, DoH, PHA, HEIs, CEC, Primary Care, Independent Sector, Patient Client Council, RCN, RCM, Unite, NISCC and NIMDTA.

NIPEC completed this project over a 12-month period during 2024. A summary of the 5 Framework's purpose and who it is intended to support is presented in Figure 5

Figure 5: Purpose of the Collective Leadership Framework



The design of the framework builds on the four components of collective leadership identified in the HSC Collective Leadership Strategy: These components aim to maximise positive impact on the delivery of quality and compassionate care and support.

Figure 6: Components of the HSC Collective Leadership Strategy (DoH, 2017)



The framework is also underpinned by a number of international, national and regional documents relative to leadership and nursing and midwifery practice. It has been aligned to relevant local policies, strategies and frameworks as set out in the in Annex 2 of the Framework document.

The Collective Leadership Framework for Nursing and Midwifery and associated Assessment Tool are designed to be used as part of a range of activities and processes. Examples are included in Figure 7:

**Figure 7: Examples of Workforce Development Activities and Processes**



The implementation of the 23 recommendations included in the Project Report will require an integrated, coherent and comprehensive strategic approach should be taken to enable implementation of the recommendations. This includes regulatory, education, improvement and professional organisations as well as all other key stakeholders across the wider health and social care system in NI. The Collective Leadership Framework was officially launched in September 2024 by the Minister of Health and the Chief Midwifery Officer (CNO).



# Role Framework for Registered Nurses:

Staff Nurse (Level of Practice 5)

Senior Staff Nurse (Level of Practice 6)



our partners

NIPEC has compiled a suite of Role Frameworks which are building blocks to support career progression and professional development. Examples of Role Frameworks have been regionally agreed for a Nursing Assistant, Senior Nursing Assistant, Ward Sister/Charge Nurse and Team Leader, Specialist Nurse, Advanced Nurse Practitioner and Consultant Nurse/Consultant Midwife.

This Role Framework has been developed for Registered Nurses in collaboration with key stakeholders. It outlines the level of practice the individual undertaking the role is expected to perform and details key knowledge, skills, behaviours described under the four pillars of practice of clinical practice, education and learning, leadership, and research and development. Regulation status, educational requirements and experience are also identified. This will enable a standardised approach to support the delivery of safe and effective person-centred care and will provide consistency, structure, guidance and direction in relation to career progression.

The Framework also provides clear expectations for Staff Nurse practice across a range of roles and settings. These roles can span wide areas of health and social care aligned to local and national legal, regulatory, professional and educational requirements. This includes but is not limited to the delivery of safe and effective care for a range of people across the continuum of care with an understanding of the wider determinants of health to promote wellbeing, protect health and prevent ill health.

## Implementation of NMC Post-registration Standards in Northern Ireland

In September 2022, the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) introduced updated Post-registration Standards, including revised Standards of Proficiency for:

- Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN)
- Community Nursing Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQ)



These standards (Figure 8) aim to enhance the quality and consistency of post-registration education across the UK.

Figure 8: NMC Post-registration Standards



NIPEC was commissioned by the Department of Health (DoH) to lead the implementation of these standards across Northern Ireland. The goal was to ensure that all relevant education and practice settings were aligned with the new standards by September 2024.

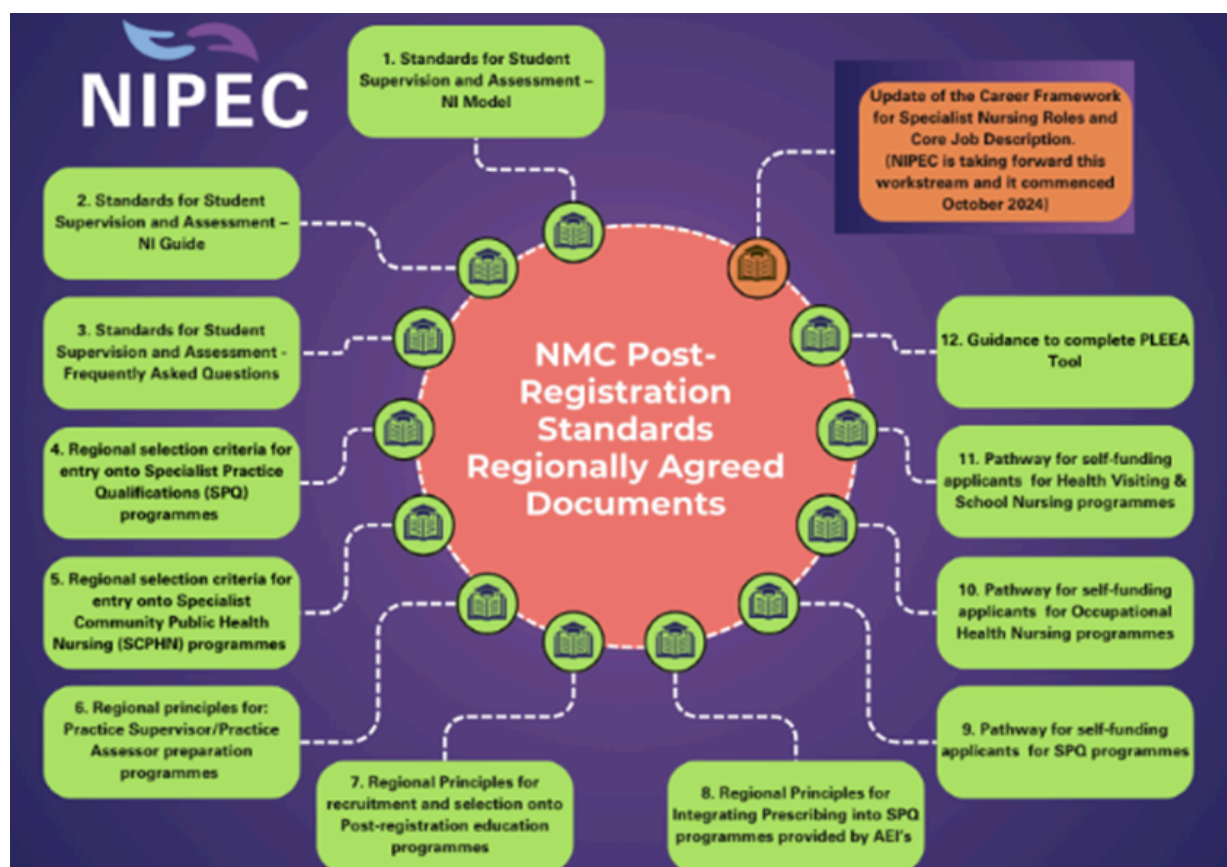
It was agreed that the same implementation principles and processes would apply to:

- All NMC-approved community nursing SPQ programmes.
- All non-community nursing SPQ programmes within Northern Ireland

NIPEC worked in partnership with the NMC, the DoH, HSC organisations, Education providers and Independent and Voluntary organisations to develop and agree upon regional standardised processes and principles to support the implementation and delivery of the new standards ahead of the allocated timeline.

A suite of regionally agreed documents (Figure 9) was produced to guide and support the implementation process. These documents outline the expectations, procedures, and frameworks necessary for successful adoption of the standards.

**Figure 9: N.I. Regionally agreed documents related to the NMC Post-registration Standards**



NIPEC also led a comprehensive engagement and communication strategy to ensure that all relevant key partners were well-informed, prepared and supported throughout the implementation process.

## Launch of the Equity of Access and Outcome Report

On the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2024 the Equity of Access and Outcome *The future role of RNLDs in support people with learning disabilities* achieve the best health possible was launched by Mr Mike Nesbitt, Minister of Health in the Long Gallery, Stormont. The event chaired by Mr Gerard McWilliams, Practitioner-Advocacy Support and Engagement Officer, of the Patient and Client Council brought together key stakeholders from across Northern Ireland. The agenda included an overview of the Report, a key note address from the Minister of Health and featured innovative and inspiring projects aligned to the Report's recommendations. The event concluded with a powerful performance from the Equal Notes Community Choir.

The Equity of Access and Outcome Report was the culmination of a regional project commissioned by the CNO and led by NIPEC, to take forward the outworking's of the Department of Health (DoH) Review of Learning Disabilities Nursing (2019) and incorporate outstanding actions from the DoH Strengthening the Commitment, Northern Ireland Action Plan (2016). The project was taken forward by the Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities (RNLD) Strategic Workforce Development Project Group, Co-chaired by the Prof Linda Kelly, Chief Executive, NIPEC and Mrs Suzanne Pullins, Executive Director of Nursing, Northern Health and Social Care Trust, supported by the RNLD Expert Reference Group (ERG).



The Equity of Access and Outcome Report presents a future focused model for RNLDs to support the delivery and the provision of nursing care that is underpinned by a population health approach, supports equitable access to person-centred outcomes focused care and ensures care is delivered by a suitability skilled and resourced nursing workforce - providing the right care at the right time in the right place, to enable people a learning disability to live the healthiest life possible. The Report sets out 27 recommendations aligned to CNOs vision for the professions of Nursing and Midwifery (2023).

Following the launch of the Report the DoH has established an Equity of Access and Outcome Implementation Oversight Group to facilitate the implementation of Reports recommendations. As part of this initiative NIPEC has been commissioned to take forward work relating to the development of the RNLD Career Pathway, a project that has recently commenced.

# Ethnic Diversity Access to Education and Career Progression

our partners

In May 2024 NIPEC established a Project Board to take forward the work to monitor and review the access to education & leadership opportunities for the ethnically diverse workforce of nurses, midwives, AHPs and support staff on behalf of the CNO. The Project was supported by six Ethnically Diverse Professional Officers, one for each of the five HSC Hospital & Community Trusts and one for the Independent Care Home Sector.

One of the important aspects of the project was to undertake a staff survey (October 2024 to January 2025) to understand the challenges facing ethnically diverse staff accessing education and leadership/career opportunities. 1,332 staff responded to the survey (see Figures 10 & 11) which was promoted by the Project Board members and through NIPEC's website and social media platforms in addition to the Professional Officers through:

- HSC Trust Communications: Screen savers on computers; email notifications via the Global Circulation List; Social Media Platforms (Facebook, X)
- Independent Sector communications
- Promotional Stands: Various Trust sites; Trust Careers Events and at external Multicultural Events
- Formal meetings with Senior Leads
- Walk about in wards and community settings

**Figure 10: Number of Staff and Professional Roles that responded to the survey**

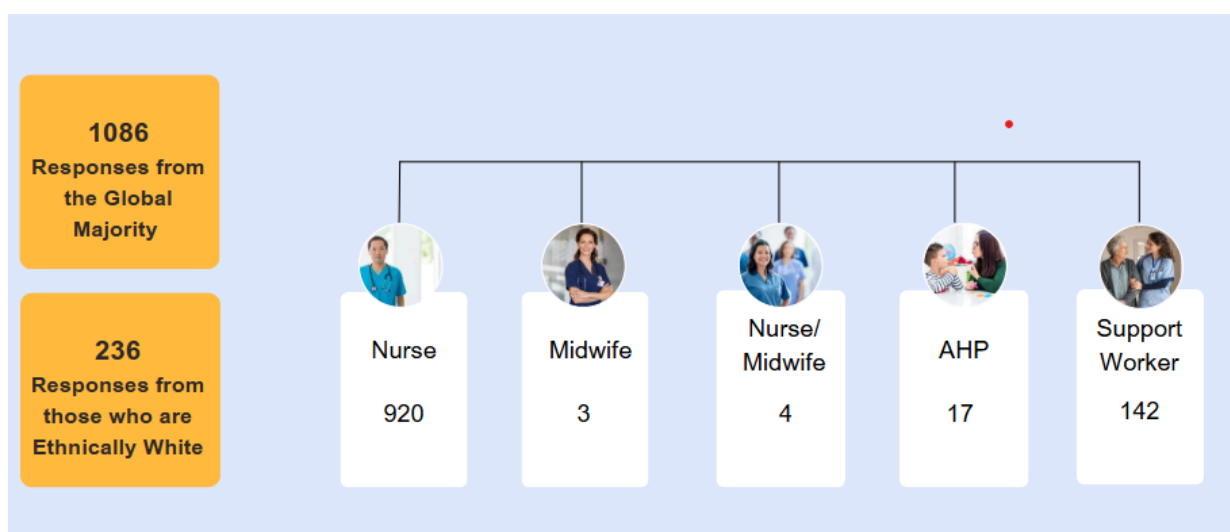


Figure 11: Ethnic Diversity[2] of respondents to the survey



Figure 12: Key Actions for organisations



[2] Only the Nursing and Midwifery Council provides data on the ethnicity of the workforce for Northern Ireland.



# Senior Nursing and Midwifery Community of Practice

our partners

Communities of practice (CoPs) are networks of professionals that share common goals or interests and can be sources of knowledge, learning and support.



During 2024/25 there have been a further three Senior Nursing and Midwifery Communities of Practice (CoP). These were initiated to meet the needs of strategic nursing and midwifery leaders and the professions.



Valuable and thought-provoking discussions have been had around the value of the professions. Findings from doctoral research exploring professional enjoyment in nursing and the factors that enhance and diminish enjoyment were shared. Insightful and stimulating discussions also took place exploring healthcare transformation and professional identity. The interactive sessions were enjoyed by members who value the CoPs and the support and inspiration they derive from them. The image below demonstrates the journey of the CoP over the past two years and NIPEC have plans to progress these further over the coming years.

## Career Pathways

The development of career pathways, aligned with the Guidance Framework for Career Pathway development, continues to be an area of focus for NIPEC. Throughout 2024-25, NIPEC has maintained strong collaboration with key stakeholders to advance the Perioperative Nursing Career Pathway, Cancer Nursing Career Pathway and Care Home Nursing Career Pathways, supporting the Department of Health's strategic priorities for nursing and midwifery. We are looking forward to integrating them into the Northern Ireland Career and Development Model for Nursing and Midwifery, currently under development.



Below is an example of one of the newer career pathways commenced during 2024/25

## Care Home Nursing

This is the first career pathway for nurses working in Care Homes across the UK and Ireland and is developed in partnership with key stakeholders whom are represented on the Steering Group. Steering group representatives include Care Home Providers, HSC Trust representatives, Academic and Education colleagues – the 3 local universities are represented along with CEC, University of Salford, Queens Nursing Institute, National Institute for Healthcare Research, Department of Health Nursing and Social Care Colleagues, and Trade Unions.

This pathway supports nurses optimise their knowledge, skills, and behaviours regardless of their role in a Care Home and supports them in the transition to senior roles.

In addition to the Steering Group, engagement events have taken place; -

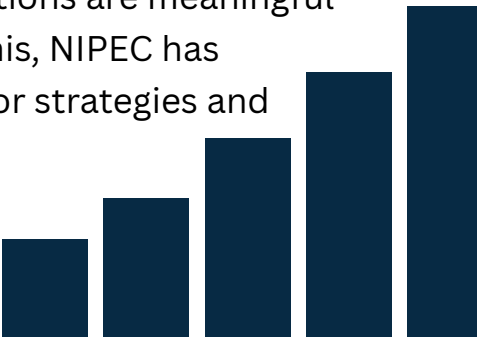
- across the 5 HSC Trusts commissioning care in Care Homes with Care Home Managers;
- with the RCN Independent Sector Nurse Manager Network;
- with student nurses across the 3 NI universities.

This work is vital to the consistency of approach as there are 242 Nursing Care Homes in Northern Ireland operated by 111 different Organisations. The career pathway will be relevant to all 242 Nursing Care Homes providing continuity across organisations.

## Influencing the culture

NIPEC's staff continue to influence policy and practice regionally and nationally by responding to consultations and outcomes of reviews and inspections.

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



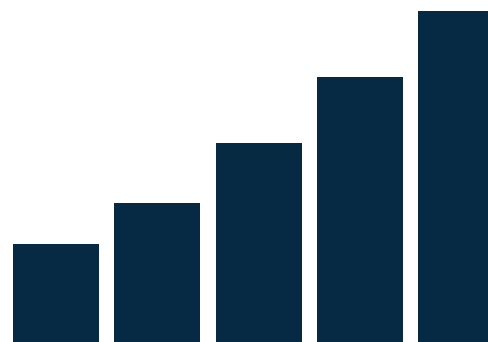
# Our Work

our work

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 partners and stakeholders across the nursing and midwifery professions within the statutory, voluntary and independent sectors.

Each NIPEC work stream, which has been set up in support of the achievement of a specific corporate objective, is championed and led by a designated senior staff member who is accountable for the effective management and delivery of the aims and objectives of each project. SPOs are supported in their professional work by administrative support. The work of NIPEC is informed by evidence and data from a variety of sources including up-to-date evidence obtained by a review of relevant literature. As an organisation we take great pride in our work and are always striving to make it better.

In this section you will read of some of our achievements as a team that demonstrate the quality of the work we do together and how we are moving to measure our progress.





## Investors in People Silver accreditation

Investors in People (IIP) is a community interest company and an agent of change, calling for a movement that puts people first – for the benefit of every person in every workplace, increased productivity across organisations, and a stronger, healthier and happier society. IIP is a well-recognised trademark of a good employer and the fact the accreditation is renewable every three years means standards have to be maintained in terms of investment in staff.

In March 2024, NIPEC was awarded with IIP Silver Accreditation. The Feedback Report included areas for improvement and some of the actions were taken forward in 2024-25 including pulse surveys to measure staff job satisfaction, teamworking activities and a further staff survey. A focus for 2025-26 will be assessment of a reward and recognition approach to be introduced for staff. The Chief Executive and Head of Corporate Services met with the IIP assessor in March 2025 to review progress after 12 months. There was discussion on all the activities, achievements and improvements that the team have introduced since accreditation, along with current challenges and short and long term aspirations.



Quality is embedded in the organisation at a corporate and professional level and is maintained as a focus within governance arrangements via the use of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). NIPEC views monitoring of performance, both financial and nonfinancial, as an important component of the information needed to explain an organisation's progress towards its goals and assist in corporate transparency. KPIs have been selected which are relevant to NIPEC's activity and using the 2024-25 Business Plan, activity is extracted, monitored and recorded within the KPI process as either a monthly or yearly figure. A copy of the KPI monitoring table is presented to each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Council. During 2024-25 information was shared with NIPEC Council on a quarterly basis through Chief Executive Reports which were tabled at each of the NIPEC Council meetings. This information influenced policy and practice by ensuring that quality initiatives were explored and introduced into the organisation.

A summary of NIPEC's Key Performance Indicators is shown in Figure 13 below and presented in our Annual Report and Accounts:

**Figure 13: Key Performance Indicators**

Targets for 2024-25	Performance in 2024-25	Performance in 2023-24
Break even on revenue and operating costs (Target: 0.25% or £20,000)	0.56% or £8,892	0.39% or £5,598
Keep within the capital resources limit (CRL)	None allocated	None allocated
Sickness absence rates (Target: 3.5%)	5.33%	0.41%
Invoice prompt Payment percentage within 30 days (Target: 95%)	100%	98.92%
Invoice prompt Payment percentage within 10 days (Target: 70%)	99%	93.84%

# Developing a Quality Dashboard

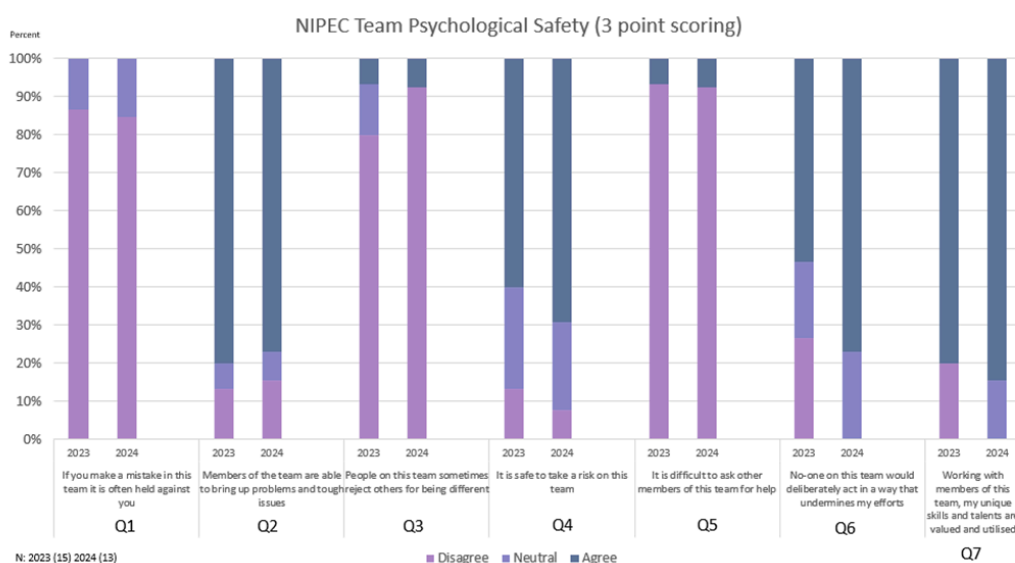
our work

Dashboards are a tool that use data visualisation techniques to support people in viewing and exploring data on processes and outcomes of their work. They can be used to inform operational decision making and quality improvement efforts. It is thought that the data provided by quality dashboards can lead to the identification of previously unnoticed patterns in data[3], informing quality improvement initiatives, and more efficient and effective decision making[4]. During 2024/25 the team in NIPEC worked to develop their own dashboard linked to the priorities within the Quality Strategy. Below you will see some of the metrics that have been created

## Our Staff

Employee wellbeing metrics are data that help us assess the state of employee wellbeing within NIPEC. Alongside staff's experience of working in NIPEC we also wanted to capture what the culture is like focusing on staff willingness to take interpersonal risks, speak up with ideas and feedback, and admit mistakes. To do this we used a survey tool on Microsoft forms and have captured the data over a 2-year period. The results of both surveys can be seen below.

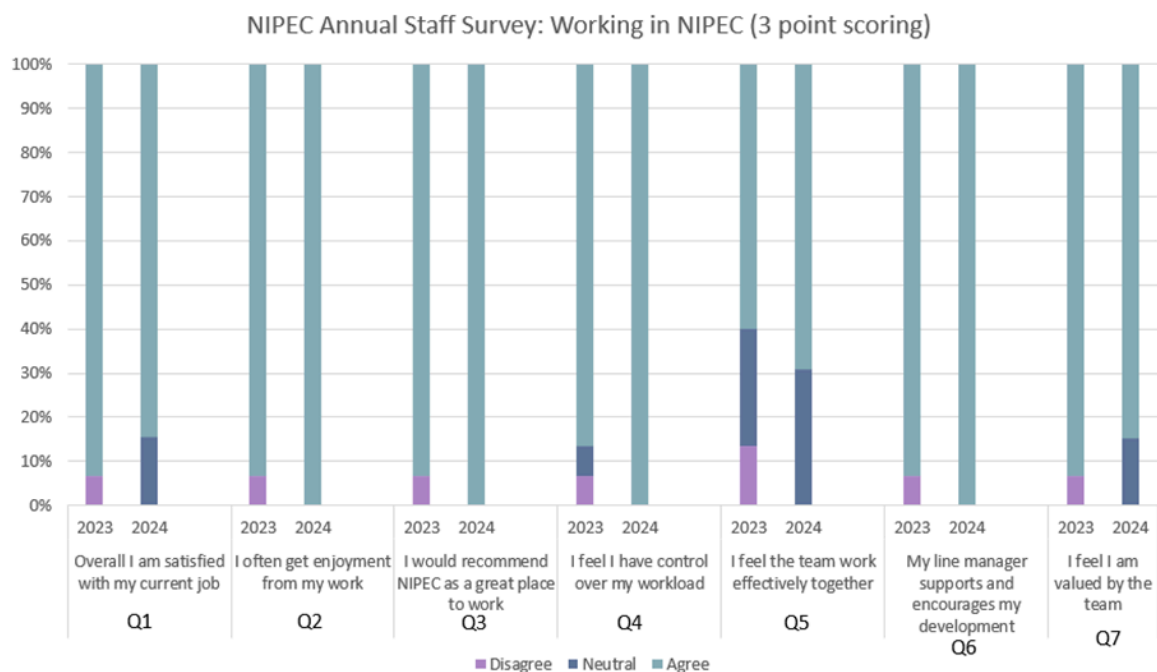
**Figure 14: NIPEC Team Psychological Safety**



[3]Tukey JW. Exploratory Data Analysis. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley. 1977 [Google Scholar]

[4]Vessey I. Cognitive Fit: A Theory-Based Analysis of the Graphs Versus Tables Literature. Decision Sciences. 1991;22((2)):219-40. [Google Scholar]

**Figure 15: Annual Staff Survey - working in NIPEC**

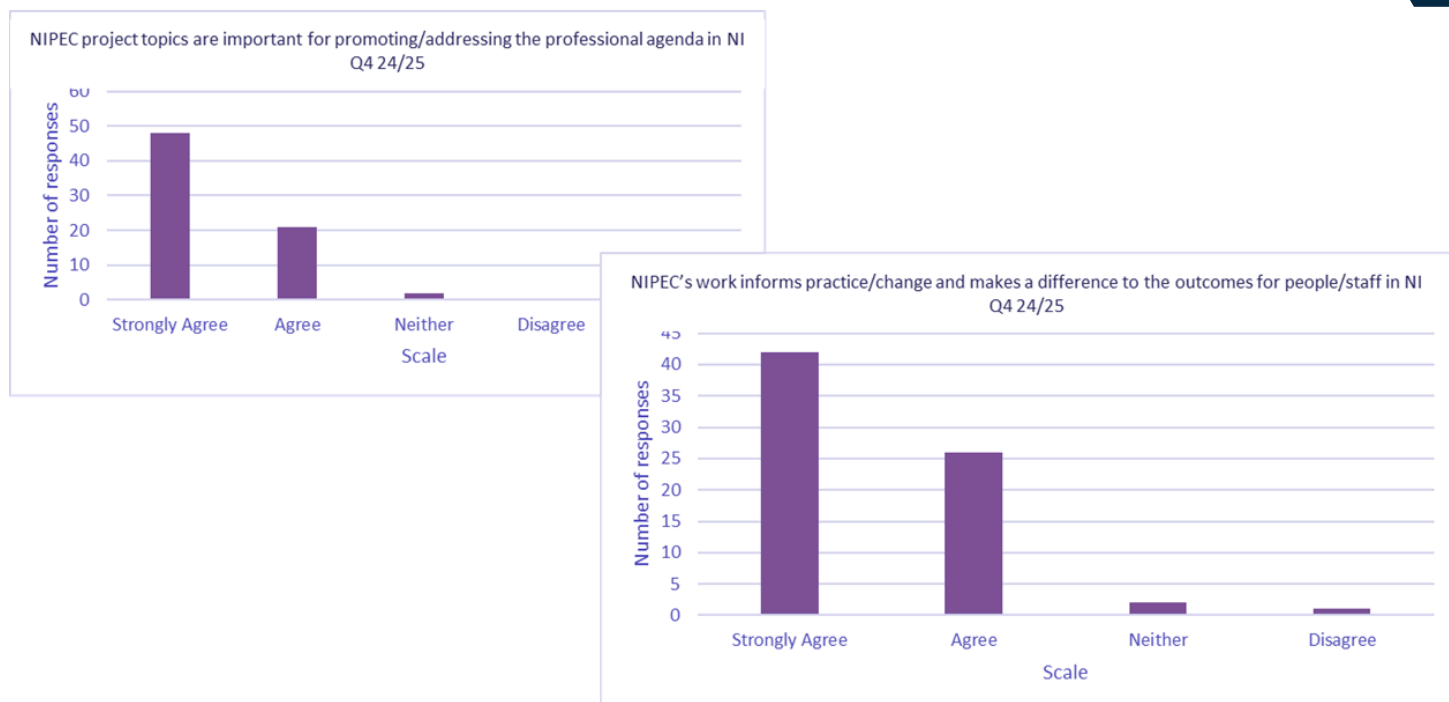


## Our Partners

Partnerships are a cornerstone of success for the work we do however, to ensure these collaborations are fruitful it's essential to measure how they think we are doing. During 2024/25 we set out to capture some feedback from those who partner with us to deliver our projects. We designed a core survey that is used across all projects along with 2 standard questions that we will include as part of any engagement activity as well. The results from quarter 4 can be seen below along with suggestions for future potential topics of focus. We will strive to build on this approach during 25/26 to strengthen the learning from our partners.



**Figure 16 a and b: Project Topics**



Below are some suggested topics from our partners for future work/events. We can use this to inform work going forward.

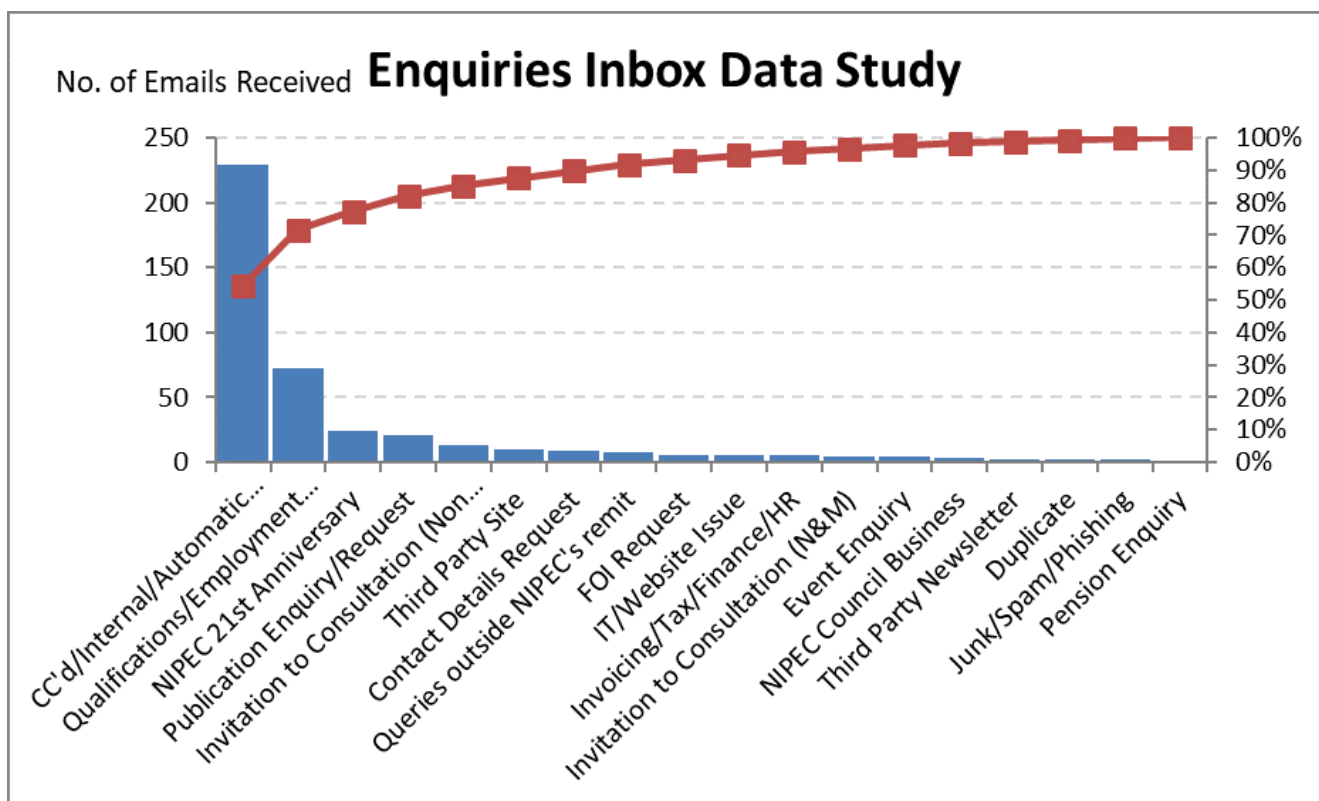
**Figure 17: Future Suggested Topics**



## Our Work

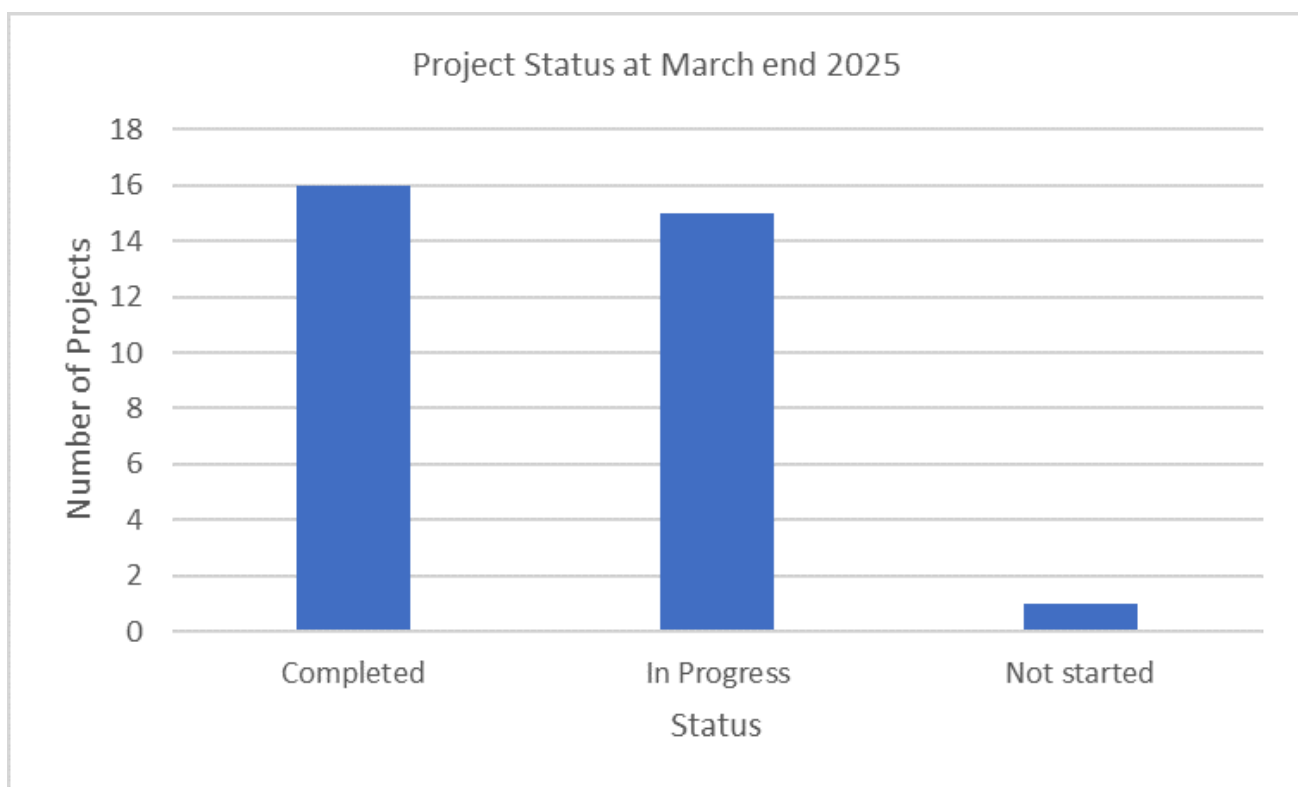
As an organisation we have a commitment and determination to do our jobs to the best of our abilities and sometimes being able to improve how we do this becomes a priority. Within NIPEC we have an email account that is available on our website for general enquiries. It was felt that a lot of the requests that were coming through that email account could be dealt with differently and save time for those who are monitoring the emails. During 2024 an audit took place of the Enquiries email inbox with over 400 emails included. The reasons for the emails were themed and we used these to inform the Frequently Asked Questions within the new website. We will continue to monitor the enquiries email account but it is envisaged this will reduce the number of emails received through this inbox.

**Figure 18 : Enquiries Inbox Data Study**



During 2024/25 the team in NIPEC also set out to create a mechanism so they could measure project progress. Without this, it's impossible to understand how the project is unfolding and whether it's on target. The earlier problems are spotted, the easier it is to implement corrective measures and reduce risk. Data that measure project progress also helps keep team members accountable for their deadlines. It isn't just a best practice to measure project progress, it's an integral part of project success. During 2024/25 a total of 32 projects were supported through different stages of development. The graph below demonstrates that 50% of them reached completion and one project didn't get off the ground.

**Figure 19: Project Status at End of March 25**



The team also developed a project weighting tool by which a score is initiated based on the resources and support required both internally and externally to meet completion timeframes. The majority of projects are within the medium weighting category as seen in the graph below. This is the first year we have tested this approach to project weighting so scores may not be fully reflective of the intensity of the work.

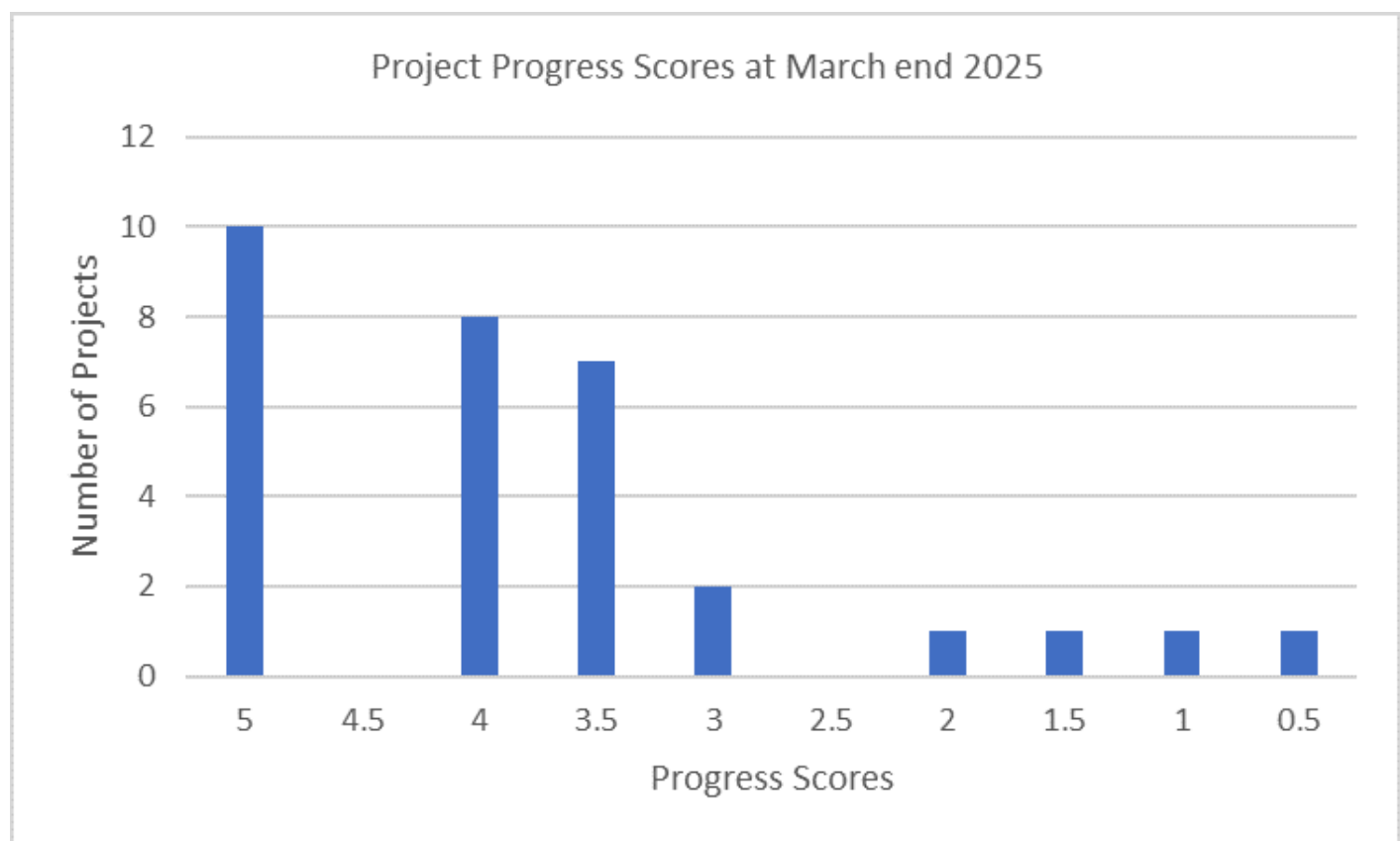
**Figure 20: Project Weighting Scores**





Alongside the project weighting a project assessment score was also developed. This scoring tool is an indicator of the progress made by each project against an assessment scale as demonstrated below. Some projects do not follow the trajectory set out as they are pieces of work that are repeated each year and included in the work plan (specifically within the advice section). Again we are testing this approach to find the best way to demonstrate project progress.

**Figure 21: Project Progress Scores**



## Communication and Engagement

In September 2024, NIPEC Council endorsed our Communication and Engagement Strategy 2024-28: Purpose, People, Plans. The document supports NIPEC's overall aim to deliver on our strategic objectives as set out in the Corporate Plan and Quality Strategy. It is vital that we communicate and engage with our partners and stakeholders and in order to do this effectively we have set a number of objectives.



We will develop plans to ensure communication and engagement is integrated into all of our work, we will engage people through enabling opportunities to share our work using the resources available to us and we will do this with purpose to build the NIPEC brand within and outside of Northern Ireland. We are committed to continually monitoring our progress using data and feedback to make improvements as we learn.

One of the key priorities over the 2024/25 period has been the redesign of the NIPEC website. Our websites are used to promote the work of NIPEC, to inform and update partners and stakeholders and to provide resources for staff across health and social care, independent and voluntary sector and education. Metrics and online enquiries were used to inform the site development while we also focused on improving accessibility and enhancing the users experience while using the website. The new-look website was launched in March 2025 with some key new features such as a project A-Z, a working in Northern Ireland section, new frequently asked questions and a revamped contact us form and process. Engagement sessions will be used during 2025 to assist with any issues and inform future developments of the site.

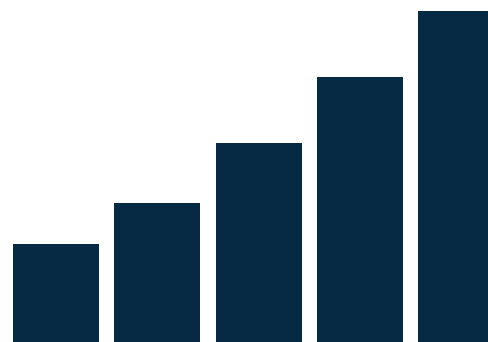
# Working Well Together: A Quality Improvement Project

our work

Since 2021, NIPEC has undergone significant transformation in staffing, location and experienced the post-Covid effect of a more hybrid approach to office and home-based working. Between 2021 and 2023, 86% of the corporate team retired (6) or left (1). In addition, NIPEC's Chief Executive retired and there were 40% permanent vacancies on the professional team. The turnover of staff and number of vacancies had a significant impact on the daily operations of the organisation and the issue was recorded as a risk on the Corporate Risk Register.

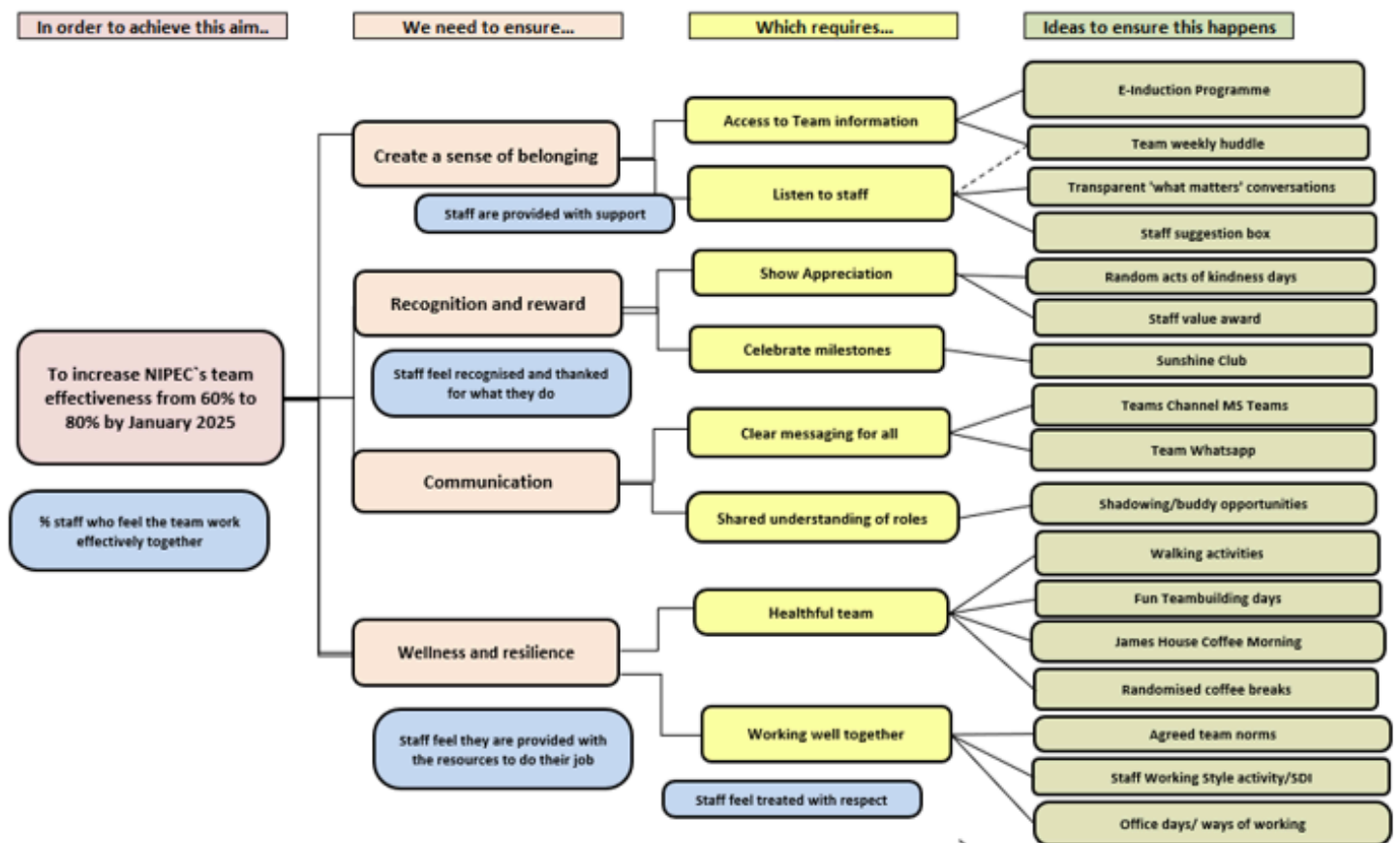
Recruitment of replacement posts was prioritised in 2022 and 2023 and following a re-profiling of the structure, a new Chief Executive, four new senior professional officers and three new corporate staff were appointed. Throughout 2023, NIPEC facilitated a series of 'what matters to you' conversations and two Staff Wellbeing surveys. Given the significant changes over the previous few years and the rebuilding of a new team, this approach was designed specifically to address any concerns from existing staff and to begin to foster a 'team identity.' From the survey results it was noted that several areas required further attention, in particular the response to the statement "I feel the team work effectively together" which was one of the lowest scoring with 13.3% opting for "strongly agree" and 46.7% stating "agree."

Similar themes were raised in the 'what matters to you' conversations with several actions arising including the need for more team activities, creating a sense of belonging, enabling staff to understand where they fit in the organisation and development of more informative induction processes. As part of NIPEC's Quality Strategy agenda an improvement project was taken forward focusing on creating a great place to work for staff.



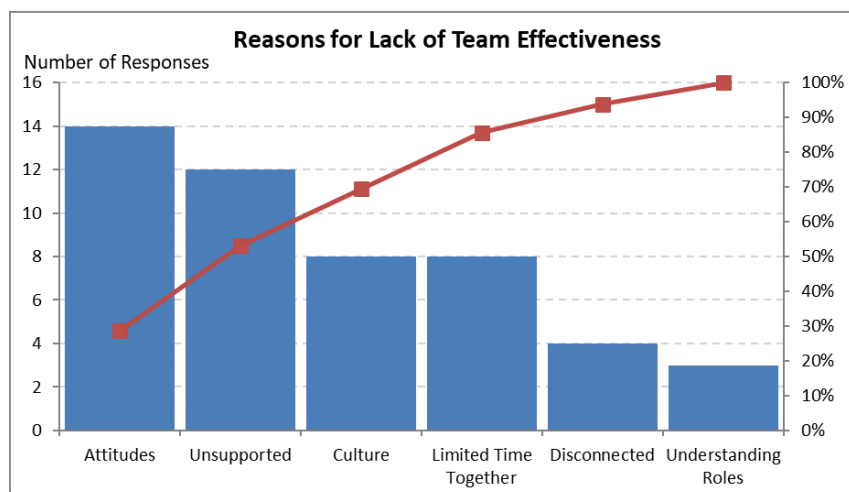
The aim of this work was **‘To increase NIPEC’s Team Effectiveness from 60-80% by January 2025’**. A number of workshops were facilitated within the team to understand the problem and to suggest ideas for change that were tested over a number of months. These were set out in the driver diagram below.

**Figure 22: Driver Diagram**



In order to understand where to focus effort a pareto chart was created that set out the reasons why staff felt we were not working well together. This prompted the development of agreed team norms which are now displayed in the office.

**Figure 23: Pareto Chart - Reasons for Lack of Team Effectiveness**



A number of pulse surveys were recorded to capture if the change ideas were working and over a few months we began to see some improvement and gradually we achieved our aim. The graph shows the improvements made during the project timeframe. The challenge will be to sustain the progress we made and we will continue to ensure this is a priority through the Health and Wellbeing group.

**Figure 24: Pulse Survey - effective together**







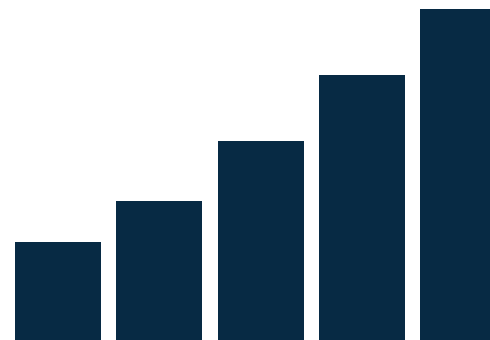
# Looking Forward



This report demonstrates the activities NIPEC has engaged in during 2024/25 to maintain and improve the quality of care provided by nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland. NIPEC will continue to play a key role in driving transformation and rebuilding services across Health and Social Care in Northern Ireland. We will continue to support and inspire nurses and midwives to achieve and uphold excellence in professional practice.

NIPEC will remain strategically focused and flexible in its approach and will work closely with the CNO (DoH) and its stakeholders to identify and agree new and emerging priorities. There will also be unique opportunities through which NIPEC will seek to work with key partners in support of the broader transformation agenda within Northern Ireland.

We hope you have found this report helpful and it has provided you with an overarching view of what NIPEC is doing to improve the quality of its services.





# Contact Us



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