



NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND EDUCATION
COUNCIL FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

August 2021

Any request for the document in another format or language will be considered

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1.0 Policy Goal

In order to achieve its mission, the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC) seeks to provide a supportive learning and development culture. This policy is intended to facilitate and secure the learning and development of all NIPEC employees. It is also intended to emphasise the ethos of continuous improvement and highlight NIPEC's commitment to lifelong learning. As a result of implementing this policy, NIPEC aims to support appropriate learning opportunities for all employees, in partnership with each employee assuming responsibility for their own learning and development.

2.0 Policy Aims

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

To enable NIPEC carry out its responsibilities, it has a core number of employees based at Centre House, Belfast with a number of Service Level Agreements in place with the Business Services Organisation and other agencies to cover outsourced activities.

NIPEC aims to support staff so that they:

- Contribute towards NIPEC's achievement of its Corporate Plan and Business Plan objectives;
- Maintain and develop the required standards of competence for their role and function;
- Are enabled to demonstrate learning and ongoing competencies as part of the reform and transformation of health and social care;
- Fulfil their own personal potential.

3.0 Learning and Development responsibilities

The responsibility for ensuring that training and staff development needs of staff meets the organisations aims and objectives rests with the Chief Executive. Each member of staff also has an individual responsibility to play a proactive role (in collaboration with their line manager using the annual staff development appraisal process) in identifying and meeting their learning and development needs.

4.0 Principles of Learning and Development Strategy

A range of strategic policies have been developed to support reform and transformation of health and social care services within Northern Ireland which includes the Minister's vision for change as set out in *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together (2016)*¹ .

¹ Department of Health. (2016). Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together. Available for download at: <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/health-and-wellbeing-2026-delivering-together.pdf>

The Department of Health (DoH) subsequently developed a HSC Collective Leadership Strategy (2017) ² in response to *Delivering Together*. In line with the principles of the Collective Leadership strategy, NIPEC subscribes to the importance of lifelong learning for the growth and development of all staff and for the organisation itself. The Collective Leadership Strategy aims to ensure that HSC organisations have the leadership they need to nurture cultures that:

- Deliver high quality, continuously improving, compassionate care and support, now and the for the future of our population;
- Equip and encourage those working in health and social care roles to deliver continuous improvement in local health and social care systems;
- Support those who work within HSC organisations to flourish, gain satisfaction, take pride and experience joy in their work.

To enable this change in HSC culture, the four components of effective and sustainable effective leadership are:

- Leadership is the responsibility of all;
- Shared leadership in and across teams;
- Interdependent and collaborative system leadership;
- Compassionate leadership.

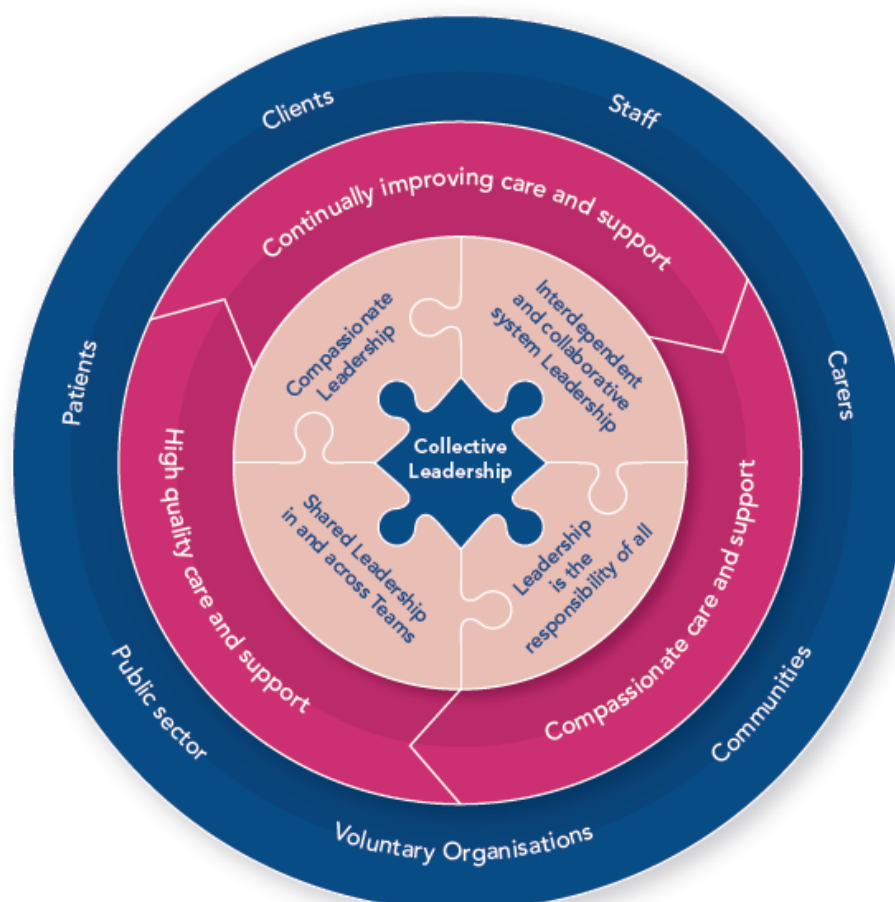


Figure 1 HSC Collective Leadership

² <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hsc-collective-leadership-strategy.pdf>

While priority in training will be given to meeting the learning and development needs of the individual as they relate to NIPEC's business aims, this will include encouragement and support for the personal and professional growth of each member of staff. This Policy applies to all employees and is aimed at maximising staff resources and potential to ensure that the following principles are met:

- a. All members of staff are encouraged to adopt the concept of lifelong learning and accept personal responsibility for assisting in their development;
- b. All members of staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to enable them to play a positive role in achieving the objectives of the organisation and to carry out their jobs to the required standard;
- c. All members of professional staff are facilitated in maintaining progress towards meeting their post registration learning and development requirements for registration and revalidation;
- d. The organisation is able to respond effectively to the environment of reform, transformation and quality improvement within which it operates;
- e. Induction training is provided for new staff and for those transferred to new sections;
- f. Staff are encouraged and assisted in achieving their potential and to use the annual staff appraisal process with their line manager to review their learning and development needs;
- g. Training is provided to all employees including equality, health and safety, information governance and other areas deemed mandatory;
- h. All learning and development activities supported by NIPEC will be evaluated.

5.0 Equal Opportunities in Learning and Development

As an equal opportunities employer, NIPEC recognises the importance of learning and development in realising equal opportunities and this is incorporated in all aspects of provision.

6.0 Definitions

The HSC Collective Leadership Strategy³ outlines a number of cultural characteristics of collective leadership for integration into everyday ways of working, including:

- Prioritising an inspirational vision and narrative – focused on quality of care and support;
- Commitment to effective, efficient performance and accountability – clear aligned goals, objectives and outcomes with helpful feedback;
- Continuous learning and quality improvement;
- Genuine team working and collaboration across boundaries;
- Modelling in our everyday behaviour the values of the organisation.

³ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/hsc-collective-leadership-strategy.pdf>

Taking cognisance of the principles of the HSC Collective Leadership Strategy, NIPEC values and recognises a range of learning and development activities through which each member of staff may gain knowledge, skills and confidence to develop competencies demonstrated in the carrying out of their daily role.

Training, development and education includes activity such as corporate mandatory training (e.g. equality and health and safety matters), academic courses, professional development programmes, conferences, e-learning, on-the-job training, workshops, webinars, seminars or other events that meet an identified developmental need. For the NMC registrants within NIPEC's workforce, reflection is a key part of learning and development.

7.0 Assessing Learning and Development Needs

Each line manager will liaise with the employee to identify the learning and development needs of their staff.

The identification of needs will usually arise from the staff appraisal meetings where the employee and their line manager will discuss and agree the employee's progress towards meeting the organisational objectives, the competencies of the post as identified from the Agenda for Change KSF post outlines and their personal development needs.

NIPEC's in-house procedure for staff undertaking a learning and development activity is outlined in Appendix 1, page 10.

Regarding training in Quality Improvement, levels of training have been identified to support specific roles across the organisation.

The Learning and Development budget will be allocated according to identified priorities and reviewed annually by the Chief Executive and the Business Team.

In order to achieve the agreed outcome each learning and development activity may require different approaches and resources. These may include:

- Work place learning internally within the organisation.
(Examples: role modelling, reviewing and evaluation, looking at systems and procedures, servicing meetings, IT training)
- Outside the work place learning.
(Examples: external working groups, project work)
- Formal learning, either structured or unstructured.
(Examples: Structured - courses, qualification, programmes; Unstructured - conferences, networking, visits also learning and development activities as shown on the NIPEC 'Online Portfolio' website)

As far as possible, NIPEC will pursue effective and efficient methods of resourcing learning and development activities. These may include:

- E-learning;
- In house delivery;
- External delivery;
- Distance learning;
- Supervision learning.

It is the responsibility of the line manager to explore the most effective and efficient way of undertaking the agreed learning activity.

8.0 Learning and Development Resources

In order to achieve the aims stated above, NIPEC is committed to providing, within resources, relevant learning and development opportunities for all staff. The learning and development needs will be initially derived from annual personal development plans completed as part of the individual objective setting activity however NIPEC will adopt an agile response to emerging needs as and when they arise. In determining the resources, a balance should be maintained between the needs of the organisation and the needs of the individual.

The following are the resources available within NIPEC which are required to implement the strategy. The resources are divided into three categories, namely Human, Time and Financial.

8.1 Human Resources

NIPEC will endeavour, where possible, to avail of the internal experience, knowledge, skills and expertise of existing staff in order to meet organisational as well as individual development needs.

However NIPEC does acknowledge that certain development initiatives will need to be sourced from external providers. In such cases NIPEC will take all appropriate steps to ensure that the most cost effective and efficient provider is sourced.

8.2 Time

NIPEC will aim to provide working time opportunities for staff to undertake learning and development activities and also support time out of roles to undertake identified activities.

8.3 Financial Resources

NIPEC has considered the financial implications of implementing this strategy, the costs of which are absorbed into and form part of, the NIPEC annual budget and planning process.

9.0 Evaluation of Learning and Development Resources

9.1 Individual's Evaluation

All learning and development activities supported by NIPEC and undertaken by staff will be evaluated as part of an employee's performance review process with their line manager. A summative evaluation questionnaire will also be completed for specific structured course provision and forwarded to Head of Corporate Services. This will facilitate the provision of information regarding the quality of the training. A copy of the questionnaire is attached in Appendix 3.

9.2 Organisation's Evaluation

This policy will be evaluated periodically, against the objectives set at 2.0 and 4.0 above, taking into account the further development needs of the organisation in the light of changes arising from organisational or legislative matters.

10. Equality and Human Rights Screening

This policy has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The screening has identified any equality impacts and outlines the way that these will be addressed. No significant equality implications have been identified therefore the policy will not be subject to an equality impact assessment.

The equality screening has been published and can be accessed here <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2166.htm>

Learning and Development Procedure

1. Introduction

NIPEC wishes to encourage staff to undertake training, development and education which is linked to its overall Mission and Values, and is directly related to the achievement of its objectives and through performance management appraisals, is relevant to individuals present or immediately foreseeable work responsibilities. Training, development and education is defined as activity such as corporate mandatory training, an academic course, professional development programme, conference, event, e-learning course, on-the-job training workshops, webinar or seminar that meets an identified development need.

NIPEC is committed to the provision of equality of opportunity in learning and development regardless of religious belief, political opinion, gender or marital status, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin, disability, domestic responsibility or Trade Union membership. This policy applies to employees and workers of NIPEC in relation to training, developmental and educational activity, inclusive of mandatory training.

2. Procedure

A key element of NIPEC's training, development and education policy is the annual objective setting and personal development planning process for each member of staff. The in-house process covers the following areas:

- Line manager and individual staff member set and agree individual objectives based on the organisation's current year's Business Plan;
- The line manager and the individual staff member discuss and agree the individual's learning and development needs for the year ahead;
- A range of learning and development activities will be considered;
- Based on the individuals own learning style and level of competence an appropriate learning activity will be agreed;
- The personal development plan is reviewed on an ongoing basis and the learning and development activities undertaken are evaluated by the line manager and the staff member and recorded.

This Procedure has, therefore, been drawn up to address the following aspects:

- a) NIPEC will provide the necessary support, within resources, to staff who wish to embark on further learning and development opportunities;

- b) NIPEC will, in discussions with staff members, identify learning and development needs in order for the staff member to meet their personal objectives. A variety of learning and development activities may be appropriate. This may include attendance at seminars/workshops or programmes of study. Where appropriate, support will be given to staff in respect of finance, time off and mentoring;
- c) Staff will also have a responsibility to identify, on an ongoing basis learning and development needs which will enhance effectiveness and improve performance;
- d) In cases where staff elect to undertake learning and development outside this process an application for support may be made which will be considered against the following criteria:
 - i. Relevance to NIPEC's Aims, Vision and Values
 - ii. Relevance to management standards which have been identified as appropriate to NIPEC
 - iii. Relevance to the individual's present or immediately foreseeable work responsibilities
 - iv. Previous training support given
 - v. Ability of the individual to undertake and complete the course of training or study
 - vi. The overall cost
 - vii. The length of the course of training or study
 - viii. The exigencies of the service.

The overall guiding principle governing the provision of support will be the exigencies of the service at time of application.

It may be that some or all of the three areas of support; finance, time off and mentoring may be made available, but this decision is entirely one for NIPEC management to make. The granting of financial support will not automatically give staff access to time off or mentoring support in any one year. The extent to which the three supports are available in a "package" or separately is entirely a matter for NIPEC management and will be reassessed each year in line with available resources.

3. Courses/Programmes considered relevant for support

In general, NIPEC will provide support to applications which meet the criteria described at (d) [i to viii] above. It must be noted however, that each application for support to undertake a learning and development activity must be judged on its merit. NIPEC recognises the changing situation in respect of learning and development methods used and courses/programmes offered and will constantly review the relevance and appropriateness of available post entry learning and development.

In order to give some guidance on courses/programmes likely to meet the criteria, ***in addition to Nursing and Midwifery qualifications***, the following examples will be considered appropriate, although this is not an exhaustive list:-

- Institute of Healthcare Management courses;

- Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administration courses;
- Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy courses;
- Certificate, Diploma, Degree and Masters programmes provided by Ulster University, Open University or Queen's University of Belfast which are HSC Management orientated;
- BTEC National and Higher National Certificates with subjects directly relevant to HSC management and supervision;
- Recognised Trade Union developmental activity pursuant to Part 4 of Agenda for Change terms and conditions handbook;
- Quality Improvement programmes e.g. HSC Quality Improvement Level 1; NIPEC QI Lite Level 1+; HSC Trust Level 2 QI programmes; Institute for Health Improvement Level 2 and Level 3; Scottish Improvement in Leadership – Level 3.

4. **Application Procedure**

- a) If a member of staff wishes to pursue a course of programme which requires the support of NIPEC then they should complete the Study Support Application Form (Appendix 2) having discussed the course content with their Line Manager.
- b) The Line Manager must complete the Application Form, indicating whether or not he/she supports the application and forward it together with relevant course or programme literature to the Chief Executive with whom the final decision rests.
- c) In reaching a decision the Chief Executive will consider the criteria at paragraph 2(d) above, taking into consideration financial assistance, mentoring support and time off. The study must be relevant to the individual's Personal Development Plan.
- d) Written confirmation of the outcome of all applications will be provided as soon as possible after the application has been considered.

NB. Requests for leave and/or expenses should be made at least 8 weeks prior to commencement of each academic year. Continued approval will also depend on standards of attendance and performance. Fees will not be paid in retrospect to any member of staff who has not been given approval by the Chief Executive.

5. **General Provisions**

- a) Following NIPEC's approval of study expenses for the approved course will be reimbursed via the HRPTS system with receipts being shown to the line manager.

The normal rate of reimbursement is 75% of expenses incurred for:

- Course fees
- Examination fees
- Text books up to a maximum of £30.00 per subject.

NB. Every effort should be made to borrow books from libraries or purchase second-hand from other students.

- b) If a member of staff leaves NIPEC or for some other reason fails to complete an approved course of study, they may be requested to refund either part or all of the costs of the course of study.
- c) Should the reason for non-completion of a course be related to pregnancy, disability, death, bereavement, sickness absence, unforeseen circumstances relating to caring or domestic responsibilities or any significant personal/business reason, then it is not envisaged that there will be a request to repay course fees.
- d) It will not be possible for NIPEC to fund the costs of the production of any Dissertation/Thesis for any Masters or higher degree.
- e) There will be no additional payments for subsistence or travel.
- f) In the event that an officer requests or expresses an interest in premature retirement, or is made redundant during the academic year NIPEC will not seek reimbursement of the financial assistance granted.

6. Time Off/Special Leave

- a) Day release shall not normally be granted where evening classes are available.
- b) Where day release is granted, time off should not exceed the equivalent of one whole working day per week during the period of the course of instruction.
- c) Paid leave may be given to attend summer school related to for example: Open University courses conditional upon the course of study being work related.
- d) Where leave is granted as block release it should not exceed 65 days in any leave year.
- e) Officers will be granted a half-day's leave on the day of the examination whether the time is outside working hours or not.
- f) A day's leave will also be granted per examination for study purposes.

All requests for full-time courses of study and secondments should be forwarded to the Chief Executive by the requesting officer's Line Manager.

All approved time off for courses of study and exams should be recorded via the HRPTS system.

7. Resits

In the event of a member of staff needing to resit an examination, a half-day's leave on the day of the examination will be granted. There will be no reimbursement for the exam fees and no study leave for resits.

8. Evaluation Questionnaire

All staff attending courses or programmes funded by NIPEC must complete an evaluation questionnaire (Appendix 3) and forward it to the Head of Corporate Services. This will provide information regarding the quality of the training and perceived value to the organisation.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Application of the Policy will be monitored to ensure adherence to the principle of Equality of Opportunity.

3. DETAILS OF PROPOSED TRAINING

Course/Qualification to be attained: _____

College/University etc.: _____

Nature of Study (Please tick):

Day-release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Correspondence	<input type="checkbox"/>
Half-day release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night Class	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Length of Course (state years/months) _____

Year of study being applied for: _____

Cost/Fees:

	Course Fees	Exam Fees	Other Fees (Please State)
Year 1			
Year 2			
Year 3			
Year 4			

What assistance are you seeking?

Day-release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial Assistance Only	<input type="checkbox"/>
Half-day release	<input type="checkbox"/>	Modular release	<input type="checkbox"/>
Night Class	<input type="checkbox"/>		

4. PREVIOUS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:

Have you previously received financial assistance from NIPEC to attain academic qualifications? (If so please list below).

Course Title	Date of Attendance	Qualification Obtained	Method of Study

5. **TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANTS SEEKING APPROVAL FOR 2nd OR SUBSEQUENT YEARS OF COURSE:**

Have you previously applied for Financial Assistance? Yes/No

Have you received Financial Assistance for all previous years of study? Yes/No

If No, please state reasons for Financial Assistance being withheld

Have you successfully completed all exams required for continuation of course Yes/No

If no, please state dates of re-sits, or action required for continuation of course:

Have NIPEC been notified of results of exams successfully completed? Yes/No

If no, please state reasons:

6. Please state your reasons for undertaking this course and its relevance to NIPEC's Mission and Business Objectives. Please also indicate the relevance to your present and/or future work and the expected benefits this training will bring to yourself and NIPEC.

7. **ACCEPTANCE**

I hereby agree to accept the provisions as laid down in the Learning and Development Policy and in consideration of the Financial Assistance granted to me in accordance with the policy. I agree that if I decide to discontinue my studies during the Academic year that I shall refund to NIPEC part or all the Financial Assistance awarded to me.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

8. **TO BE COMPLETED BY LINE MANAGER**

I do/do not support this application for the following reasons:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please forward to Chief Executive with relevant course literature.

9. **TO BE COMPLETED BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

I do/do not approve this application for the following reasons:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please forward a copy to the BSO's Human Resources Department for filing within the staff member's personal file.

DEVELOPMENT / TRAINING EVENT EVALUATION RECORD



Name:		
Job Title:		
Brief details of development opportunity / training event attended:		
Venue:		
Organiser:		
Dates:	Times:	Fee / costs:

Your reflections on your learning opportunity / training event

1.	What did you hope to learn / achieve from the opportunity / event?	
2.	Was this achieved?	Yes/No
	If no, why do think this was not achieved?	
3.	Do you feel the opportunity / event was appropriate to your learning needs?	Yes/No
	If no, please explain why not	

4.	How will you apply the learning from this opportunity / event to your current role and responsibilities?	
5.	Do you feel further learning is required to meet your original objectives?	Yes/No
	If yes, what do you feel this should be?	
6.	Please identify which parts of the opportunity / event you found particularly useful?	
7.	Please identify parts of the opportunity / event you found less useful? (please say why)	
	If this was an in-house opportunity/event, what aspects do feel could be improved?	
8.	Would you recommend the opportunity / event for other staff?	Yes/No
	Please identify who and why:	

Your Line Manager's reflections

9.	Was this opportunity / event of benefit to the:	
	a) individual	Yes/No
	Please say how:	
	b) organisation	Yes/No
	Please say how:	
10.	Please use the following space to add any further evaluation you may wish to make.	

Please return this completed form to your line manager, who will arrange for your training records to be updated if relevant, and place a copy with your Personal Development Plan for discussion at your appraisal or development review meeting.

You are also advised to keep a copy in your portfolio.