



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

***Cancer Nursing Career Pathway***

**PROJECT PLAN**

**March 2023**



## **CONTENTS**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.0 Background</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3.0 Project Aim, Objectives &amp; Scope</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.0 Methodology</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.0 Workplan and Project Timescales</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6.0 Resources</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7.0 Dissemination and Implementation</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>8.0 Equality and Governance Screening</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>9.0 Evaluation</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix 1: Project Steering Group Membership</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix 2: Role Development Writing Groups</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Career Pathway Workplan &amp; Timescales</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendix 4: Outcome of Screening Assessment</b>	<b>15</b>

Updated 3 March 2023

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2022, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) commissioned the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) to develop a Cancer Nursing Career Pathway. The aim of the pathway is to enhance, and develop roles and responsibilities for registered nurses and nursing assistants to improve the quality of care and treatment for people within cancer services.
- 1.2 To support this programme of work, a Project Steering Group has been established, co-chaired by Lesley Mitchell, Interim Assistant Director of Acute Services (Nursing) for Cancer and Diagnostics, Western HSC Trust (WHSC) and by Lorna Nevin, Nurse Consultant for Cancer, Public Health Agency (PHA). The Steering Group comprises Senior Nurses within HSC Trusts, Education Provider organisations, the Department of Health (DoH), the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), Unison and the Directors of Human Resources (HR) Forum (Appendix1).

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The number of cancer cases diagnosed in Northern Ireland has increased 54% over the past 25 years and is projected to double by 2040. While there have been many advances in the diagnosis, treatment and care of people over recent years. We know that with many more people surviving cancer, combined with a rapidly ageing population our current system is unsustainable<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.2 The *Cancer Strategy for Northern Ireland 2022-2032* (DoH, 2022), launched in March 2022, supports specialist cancer nursing services both in hospital and community settings including near to home. This ambitious ten-year plan outlines an overall vision for cancer service improvements and improved cancer outcomes, for NI with a specific aim for all patients including children and young people diagnosed with cancer, to have access to a Clinical Nurse Specialist during all aspects of their cancer care pathway and treatment journey. A holistic needs assessment is to be offered, with an appropriate care plan provided and signposts to relevant sources of help and support. In addition, the strategy will ensure that all those who have completed cancer treatment will be assessed and risk stratified to appropriate follow-up care pathways.

---

<sup>1</sup> DoH (2022) A Cancer Strategy for Northern Ireland 2022-2032 [www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)  
Updated 3 March 2023

- 2.3 In order to meet the vision set out in the *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together* strategy (DoH, 2016)<sup>2</sup> there is an emerging and anticipated need to develop cancer nursing career pathways, with more services being delivered by new, extended and advanced nursing roles in place, in line with relevant guidelines and best practice.
- 2.4 To support this, the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group (DoH, 2020)<sup>3</sup> sets out both recommendations and an implementation plan to maximise these nursing contributions through the development of new roles, responsibilities and skill mix. These will link directly with the development of career pathways for various enhanced nursing roles including advanced and consultant nurse roles across the wide range of cancer services. This in turn will address some of the recommendations included in the *Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy* (DoH, 2016)<sup>4</sup> which also demonstrates commitment to growing the Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) workforce and embedding advanced nursing practice across a range of clinical settings (DoH, 2019)<sup>5</sup>.
- 2.5 Furthermore, the RCN published a Career Pathway and Education Framework for Cancer Nursing in 2022<sup>6</sup> which outlines a clinical toolkit of academic requirements and progression utilising a career pathway and educational framework for cancer nursing services. It also enables practitioners at all levels, to apply cancer specific knowledge and skills towards the management of complex needs and acknowledges the contribution of these roles within multi-disciplinary teams and this specialist field of practice.
- 2.6 Another useful framework to help inform the development of this career pathway is the Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development programme (ACCEND)<sup>7</sup> developed by (Health Education England, 2022). The ACCEND programme provides guidance on the knowledge, skills and capabilities required by all cancer support workers, nurses and allied health professionals who care for people living with cancer in generalist and specialist cancer services and roles as part of multi-professional teams across the four UK nations.

---

<sup>2</sup> DoH (2016) Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together [www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

<sup>3</sup> DoH (2020) The Nursing and Midwifery Task Group (NMTG) Executive Summary [www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

<sup>4</sup> DoH (2016) Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy [www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

<sup>5</sup> DoH (2019) Transformation in action Advanced Nursing Practitioners in NI [www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

<sup>6</sup> RCN (2022) Career Pathway and Education Framework for Cancer Nursing: toolkit. March 2022. London: RCN

<sup>7</sup> HEE (2022) Aspirant Cancer Career and Education Development Programme [www.hee.nhs.uk](http://www.hee.nhs.uk)

- 2.7 The pandemic has had devastating consequences on an already stretched infrastructure for cancer services particularly in relation to hospital waiting times, face-to-face care, timely cancer diagnosis and delays to treatment, which will likely lead to an increase in cancer deaths in the coming years.
- 2.8 In order to commence the development of the cancer nursing career pathway the co-chairs of the Steering Group decided it was important to get the views of key stakeholders at a workshop to inform the following aspects of the pathway: the core clinical nursing roles; the parameters of care setting; and key constituent membership of the Steering Group. The Steering Group will represent a wide variety of clinical, management, leadership and education roles across a range of settings, and most importantly people with a lived experience of cancer.
- 2.9 The workshop was held on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and a summative report was shared with all those who attended the workshop, including those who were invited. The report provides a baseline for discussion with the Steering Group members at the first meeting.

### **3.0 Project Aim and Objectives**

#### **Aim**

- 3.1 The Project Steering Group will work with key stakeholders, to 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.

#### **Objectives**

- 3.2 To achieve this purpose, the Steering Group will meet the following objectives:
- Development of core competencies and education requirements for regionally agreed core roles in cancer nursing, within these two key areas.

- Development of regionally agreed Job Descriptions for these core cancer nursing roles.
- Development of cancer nursing career pathway and resources for inclusion on nursing and midwifery careers website.
- Development of a microsite on NIPEC`s main website hosting all the resources and seek permission for it to be available to access on the NI nursing and midwifery careers website.

### **Scope of the Project**

- 3.3 The components of the cancer nursing career pathway will be developed, during the first phase of the project, commencing in June 2022. It is intended that phase two will see the inclusion of the cancer nursing career pathway on the nursing and midwifery careers website.

## **4.0 Methodology**

A Project Steering Group will be established, co-chaired by Lesley Mitchell, Interim Assistant Director of Acute Services (Nursing) for Cancer and Diagnostics, Western HSC Trust and Lorna Nevin, Nurse Consultant for Cancer, PHA. Steering Group membership will represent Senior Nurses within HSC Trusts, Education Provider organisations, DoH, the RCN, Unison and the Directors of HR Forum (Appendix1).

- 4.1 Role Development Writing Groups will be established to take forward the development of the core roles within the career pathway, (see Appendix 2 Membership of Role Development Writing Groups). This will involve:
- For the agreed roles; a role descriptor for each role and to review the core competencies for cancer nursing from the relevant Frameworks
  - Adopt/Adapt/Amend the core competencies for the agreed roles
  - Identify the education requirements for each role
  - Development of Job Descriptions for each role

- 4.2 A workshop following the first Steering Group was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 2023 for the leads of the Role Development Writing Groups and representatives from each Trust, to plan their work programme.
- 4.3 Given the challenges of holding meetings and progression of this work, the use of digital technologies will be maximised to engage with stakeholders and achieve the various project outcomes, for example, video calls for meetings.
- 4.4 The outputs developed will be tested with colleagues in service and with education providers before being signed off by the Steering Group and submitted to the CNO for approval.

**5.0 Workplan and Project Timescales**

- 5.1 The career pathway will be completed according to the steps in the Workplan and in line with the proposed timescales, see Appendix 3. The Steering Group are responsible for ensuring the project is delivered to the agreed timescales.
- 5.2 The project governance structure is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Cancer Nursing Career Pathway Project Governance Structure



## **6.0 Resources**

6.1 NIPEC will provide professional project management support for the Steering Group meetings.

## **7.0 Dissemination and Implementation**

7.1 Communication and consultation processes will be ongoing throughout the project using various mechanisms including the NIPEC website, along with utilisation of key stakeholders' communication mechanisms. This will reflect the progress of the project and encourage individuals to contribute to and participate in the project at various stages.

## **8.0 Equality and Governance Screening**

This project plan has been screened for equality implications as required by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the NI Act 1998.

As a result of these considerations the screening has identified some equality impacts for a number of groups and outlines the way these will be addressed.

The equality screening has been published and can be accessed at:

[Draft Equality Screening Career Pathway Cancer Nursing 31-May-22](#)

In addition, to ensure NIPEC and its stakeholders are meeting its legal obligations and responsibilities under various Corporate Governance areas, the project plan, its aims and objectives and outcomes have been examined and screened for any issues relating to the following areas:

- Risk Management
- Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)
- Personal Public Involvement (PPI)

A summary of these considerations and any action required is documented in Appendix 3.



## **9.0 Evaluation**

- 9.1 Ongoing evaluation of the management of the project will be conducted through NIPEC and will ultimately feed into the progress and outcomes of the project. This evaluation will address the achievements of the objectives outlined in the project plan and the project management process.

## Project Steering Group Membership

Name	Role/ Organisation
Lesley Mitchell	Co-chair, Interim Assistant Director of Acute Services (Nursing) for Cancer and Diagnostics Western HSC Trust
Lorna Nevin	Co-chair Nurse Consultant for Cancer Public Health Agency (PHA)
Geraldine McKendry	Project Lead NIPEC
Cathy McCusker	Career Pathways Lead NIPEC
Geraldine Byers	Belfast HSC Trust
Bernie Mc Shane	Belfast HSC Trust
Kristy-Lee Greene	Northern HSC Trust
Claire Black	South Eastern HSC Trust
Clair Quin	Southern HSC Trust
Celia Diver-Hall	Western HSC Trust
Michael Riddell	HR Business Partner NHST for and on behalf of Human Resources Directors Forum
Dr Patricia McNeilly	Department of Health
Deirdre Cunningham	Nurse Consultant for District Nursing PHA
JulieAnne McKeown	Senior Nurse Urology
Angela McLernon	GP Federation
Ruth Thompson	RCN
TBC	Unison

Updated 3 March 2023

TBC	Regional Trade Union Forum
Tom Mulligan	Clinical Education Centre
Siobhan Johnston	Open University
Monica Donovan	Queen's University Belfast
Dr Cherith Semple	Ulster University
Dawn Ferguson	Nursing Workforce Lead, Southern HSC Trust
Helen McGarvey	Retired Senior Nurse Lecturer, Person Living with Cancer (PLC)
Allison Begg	The Ulster Independent Clinic
TBC	Kingsbridge Healthcare Group
Sally Convery	Nurse Consultant for Palliative and End of Life Care PHA

## Role Development Writing Groups

Clinical Role Groups	Co-leads	Organisation	Other Trust Reps	Other Organisation Reps
<b>Support Worker</b>	Angela McKeever	WHST	SHSCT Amy Ward SEHST Angela Berry NHSCT Kristy-lee Greene	OU Siobhan Johnston
	Debbie McKelvey	BHSCT		
<b>Registered Nurse</b>	Claire Black	SEHST	NHSCT Kristy- lee Greene BHSCT Anne Crockett WHST Danielle O'Connor Clinical Trials Nurse Ruth Boyd	QUB Dr Barry Quinn CEC Tom Mulligan PHA Deirdre Cunningham Retired Lecturer/ PLC Helen McGarvey
	Nicola Shannon	SHSCT		
<b>CNS</b>	Jacque Warwick	WHST	SHSCT Theresa Clarke BHSCT Lynne Edgar SEHST Martina McVeigh	UU Andrea Shepherd QUB Dr Helen Kerr PHA Sally Convery
	Moyra Mills	NHSCT		
<b>ONP/HNP</b>	Sarah McCauley	SEHST	WHST Claire Kennedy BHSCT June Mac Auley NHSCT Kirsty McKay	UU Dr Carrie Flanagan
	Matthew Kelly	SHSCT		

Updated 3 March 2023

<b>ANP</b>	Edel Aughey	BHSCT	NHSCT Lisa Lyons SEHSCT Rachel Forster WHSCT Sinead Molloy	UU Dr Esther Beck RCN Ruth Thompson QUB Dr Helen Kerr
	Louise Gribben	SHSCT		
<b>Consultant Nurse</b>	Sheena Stothers	SEHSCT	NHSCT Moyra Mills WHSCT Lesley Mitchell SHSCT Clair Quin BHSCT Geraldine Byers	UU Dr Cherith Semple QUB Professor Joanne Reid
	Lorna Nevin	PHA		
<b>Children's All Roles</b>	Bernie McShane	BHSCT	BHSCT Emma Dinsmore Cara Curran Joanne Lewis SHSCT JuliAnne Lee WHSCT - TYA Roisin Herron SEHSCT – TYA Lisa Callendar	QUB Dr Briedge Boyle CEC Brenda Murphy
	Dr Patricia McNeilly	DoH		

## Appendix 3

### Career Pathway Workplan & Timescales

Phase 1 Activity	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	Apr 2023	May 2023	Jun 2023
Workshop to capture views on the necessary elements of the career pathway	29									
Create a Draft Project Plan and proposed work plan										
Establish Steering Group										
Convene first Steering Group meeting to agree project plan, workplan and timescales				1						
Hold Workshop to guide the development of the first roles, competencies and education					27					
Role Development Writing Groups to commence development of core roles						24				
Convene 2 <sup>nd</sup> Steering Group meeting to provide an update on progress and approve							2			
Role Development Writing Group`s to continue development of core roles							24	21	19	
Hold 2 <sup>nd</sup> Workshop for Role Development Writing Group`s feedback and agreement of the roles, competencies and education requirements									23	
Convene 3 <sup>rd</sup> Steering Group meeting to agree roles, competencies, education requirements and propose update										

Updated 3 March 2023

for CNO Business Meeting										1
Produce final document										
<b>Phase 2 Testing</b>	<b>July 23</b>	<b>Aug 23</b>	<b>Sep 23</b>	<b>Oct 23</b>	<b>Nov 23</b>	<b>Dec 23</b>	<b>Jan 24</b>	<b>Feb 24</b>	<b>Mar 24</b>	<b>Apr 24</b>
Testing of competencies and education requirements with teams										
Development of JDs and seeking feedback with teams										
Submission and approval of Pathway and JDs to CNO Business Team										
JDs sent for job matching and evaluation										
Regional JDs matched and evaluated submitted to HSC Trusts for adoption and implementation										

## Outcome of Screening Assessment

Screening Assessment	Comments
<b>Risk Management questions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have any risks been identified?</li> </ul> <p>If no - no further action is required. If yes then,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the potential impact of these?</li> <li>• How can these be mitigated or have alternatives options been identified which would have a lower risk outcome?</li> <li>• Where negative impacts are unavoidable, has clarity been given to the business need that justifies them?</li> </ul>	No
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment questions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the project/initiative use personal information and/or pose genuine risks to the privacy of the individual?</li> <li>• Will the project/initiative result in a change of law, the use of new and intrusive technology or the use of private or sensitive information, originally collected for a limited purpose, to be reused in a new and unexpected way?</li> </ul>	No  No
<b>Personal and Public Involvement questions</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will the project/initiative require input from patients/clients?</li> </ul> <p>If no - no further action is required. If yes - please apply NIPEC's Personal and Public Involvement Policy.</p>	The Steering Group will seek to have input from service users through existing Trust PPI forums.





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

**March 2023**