



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

**ADVANCED NURSING
PRACTICE IN NORTHERN
IRELAND**

Analysis and Recommendations

Project Initiation Document

October 2022



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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 NIPEC led a programme of work between 2014 and 2016, to produce a framework with the aim of providing clarity regarding the role of the Advanced Nurse Practitioner.
- 1.2 A Steering Group was established, chaired by an HSC Trust Executive Director of Nursing. Steering Group members were representative of senior nurses in HSC Trusts, Public Health Agency (PHA), Education Providers, Department of Health (DoH), Royal College of Nursing (RCN). Also represented on the Group were the Directors of Human Resource (HR) Forum and Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA).
- 1.3 The *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework*¹ was launched in 2016 by the then Chief Nursing Officer (CNO).
- 1.4 An MSc Advanced Nursing Practice programme was subsequently commissioned, co-produced and delivered from 2017, underpinned by the *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework* and funded by the DoH.
- 1.5 In June 2022, Maria McIlgorm, CNO, asked NIPEC to conduct a further programme of work to inform the strategic direction and future needs of Advanced Nursing Practice in Northern Ireland. The aim, objectives and methodology for this programme of work are outlined within this document.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 According to the International Council of Nurses² (ICN), “*an Advanced Practice Nurse is a registered nurse who has acquired the expert knowledge base, complex decision-making skills and clinical competencies for expanded practice, the characteristics of which are shaped by the context and/or country in which s/he is credentialed to practice*”.
- 2.2 In Northern Ireland, an Advanced Nurse Practitioner has been defined as practising autonomously within his/her expanded scope of clinical practice, guided by The Code³, demonstrating highly developed assessment, diagnostic, analytical and clinical judgement skills. An Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) manages the complete clinical care of patients using their advanced knowledge and skills. They offer an innovative nursing solution that adds value to patient outcomes and improves population health outcomes. The Department, through the implementation of *Delivering Together 2026*⁴ and the *Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy*⁵,

¹ Department of Health (2016) *The Advanced Nursing Practice Framework; Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice in Health and Social Care Trusts*. Belfast: DoH.

² ICN (2020) *Guidelines on Advanced Practice Nursing* available at https://www.icn.ch/system/files/documents/2020-04/ICN_APN%20Report_EN_WEB.pdf

³ Nursing & Midwifery Council (2018) *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*. London: NMC.

⁴ DoH (2016b) *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*. Belfast: DoH.

are committed to growing the ANP workforce and embedding advanced nursing practice across a range of clinical settings⁶.

- 2.3 Over the past decade in Northern Ireland, a number of different yet complementary roles have developed beyond the point of initial professional registration, which now includes Specialist Nurses, Advanced Nursing Practitioners, and Consultant Nurses. As these roles have evolved, there has been significant debate over how to differentiate between them, as shared features can often be identified.
- 2.4 Northern Ireland's *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework* was developed to provide clarity on advanced nursing practice, which is supported by a set of four core competencies and related learning outcomes. The NI Framework, which was based on work completed nationally and internationally in Republic of Ireland (2005), Scotland (2007), Hamric *et al* (2009), Wales (2010), England (2010), Australia (2011) and RCN (2018), identified that advanced nurse practitioners focus on managing whole episodes of complete clinical care in contrast to specialist practitioners who focus on discrete aspects of a patient's care.
- 2.5 Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) are educated to Masters Level and have been assessed as competent in practice using their expert clinical knowledge and skills. They are currently working within various health and care settings including general practice, emergency departments, medical assessment units, out of hour's services and within specialties such as paediatrics, orthopaedics and cancer care. More nurses will be needed with advanced practice skills to work across all settings.
- 2.6 To support this, the Department's Delivering Care Policy (safe staffing) (DoH, 2012) has subsequently commissioned discreet phases which have resulted in significant investment. To date this has included the development of ANP roles in Primary Care, Emergency Care and Children's Nursing, which has been a significant achievement, with the first NI ANP Masters level graduates completing the ANP programme at Ulster University in 2019 across these three pathways. Since then, a further two ANP pathways have been commissioned in Adult and Mental Health Nursing, due to commence in 2022.
- 2.7 This education programme supports Advanced Nurse Practitioners to make autonomous decisions in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients

⁵ DoH (2018) *Health And Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026. Delivering For Our People* available at [hsc-workforce-strategy-2016.pdf](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-and-social-care-workforce-strategy-2026) (health-ni.gov.uk) accessed on 5 January 2022 www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-and-social-care-workforce-strategy-2026

⁶ DoH (2019) *Transformation in Action: Advanced Nursing Practitioners in Northern Ireland* available at <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/transformation-action-advanced-nursing-practitioners-northern-ireland>

within his/her scope of clinical practice, guided and regulated by *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates* (NMC, 2018). Clinical autonomy is one of the cornerstones of advanced nursing practice globally (Lockwood *et al*, 2021).

- 2.8 The *Advanced Nurse Practitioner Framework* (DoH, 2016a) advises that registered nurses working at this advanced level will undertake comprehensive health assessments and will manage a range of illnesses and conditions that frequently present in the care settings within which the individual works. S/he will:
- practise autonomously within an expanded scope of practice
 - demonstrate a person-centred approach to care delivery
 - develop and sustain partnerships and networks to influence and improve healthcare outcomes and healthcare delivery
 - educate, supervise or mentor nursing colleagues and others in the healthcare team
 - contribute to and undertake activities, including research, that monitor and improve the quality of healthcare and the effectiveness of practice. It must be noted that only those who meet the requirements of the role and who are employed as Advanced Nurse Practitioners, will be able to use the title.
- 2.9 The HSC is facing significant challenges due to financial and budgetary restraints that make high-quality patient care ever more difficult to deliver. *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together* (DoH, 2016b) sets out an ambitious future vision to maximise the transformation of health and social care in NI. Work is well underway on the development of workforce and leadership strategies, to make sure that the health and social care system has the right people and the right leadership to deliver safe, high quality services now and meet the challenges of the future (DoH, 2016c).
- 2.10 Advanced nursing practice roles are increasingly seen as key to the development and delivery of health and social care services with a growing population of ageing patients who have comorbidities and complex needs, additional demands and pressures on the HSC system and ongoing attempts to safeguard the future of health and social care provision in NI. The potential of these roles needs to be maximised (DoH, 2016b).
- 2.11 In response to *Delivering Together* (DoH, 2016b) and the increasing demands on the workforce, a Nursing and Midwifery Task Group was established to identify how the contribution of nurses and midwives can be maximised to improve population health outcomes. The task group's work was underpinned by a public health approach that promotes health and wellbeing and sets out an ambitious future agenda for nursing and midwifery which will make a significant contribution to the transformation of health and social care, as set out in the *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together 2026 Vision*. The recommendations in the report will

facilitate the adoption of a population public health approach and put prevention and early intervention at the heart of nursing and midwifery practice.

- 2.12 Addressing the workforce challenges is strategically essential for the stabilisation of the nursing and midwifery workforce and health and social care delivery. To support this, the recommendations within the *Nursing and Midwifery Task Group Report* (DoH, 2020) provide a clear roadmap to maximise the contribution of nursing and midwifery. It is the ambition that nursing and midwifery deliver the right evidence-based care, with the right numbers, at the right time, in right place, by the right person with the right knowledge, and of course most importantly delivering the right experience and outcomes for persons, families and communities (DoH, 2020).
- 2.13 Alongside workforce shortages, the NMTG report identifies the lack of specialist and advanced clinical posts as a major concern, particularly the impact on delivering the ambition outlined in *Deliver Together* (DoH, 2016b). To maximise the contribution of nursing and midwifery to deliver safe and effective person and family centred care, the NMTG (DoH, 2020) recommends a strategic plan for the ANP workforce.
- 2.14 It is worth highlighting the NMTG recommendations also take account of the new mandatory Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) *Future Nurse Future Midwife* (FNFM) proficiency standards launched in May 2018 (Nursing) and November 2019 (Midwifery). These standards are set to revolutionise and modernise nursing and midwifery practice, and they are strongly focused on evidence-based care, delivering population health, and patient and women centred care which will improve outcomes for people.
- 2.15 Similarly, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) are currently reviewing post-registration standards and as a part of this, advanced practice is anticipated to be considered in the future.
- 2.16 *The Advanced Nurse Practitioner Framework* (DoH, 2016a) was designed to support Advanced Nurse Practitioners to develop as professional nurse leaders in their area of clinical practice. It is a vital resource to assist them in meeting the challenges of transition of service delivery from predominantly acute-based to community settings, with an enhanced focus on improving outcomes for our population's health and wellbeing; highlighted in *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together* (DoH 2016b).
- 2.17 It is therefore timely, in the current context, to ensure that the ANP programmes on offer are flexible, adaptable and responsive to the current needs and anticipated future service requirements to support the strategic agenda (in the knowledge of NMC planned review programme), responsive in meeting the learning and development needs of the professions to enable transformational change, whilst ensuring value for money.

2.18 This will enable a strategic and consistent approach in relation to further development of the Advanced Nurse Practitioner role and will act as a guide for commissioners, workforce planners, Executive Directors of Nursing, education providers, employers and managers of nurses, including nurses themselves.

3.0 Aim

3.1 Undertake a programme of work to inform the strategic direction and future needs of Advanced Nursing Practice in Northern Ireland.

4.0 Objectives

The following objectives will support the achievement of the aim:

Phase 1:

- Review the existing education requirements and delivery model of the ANP Education Programme in Northern Ireland;
- Engage with relevant stakeholders, including the NMC to ensure alignment of future regulatory NMC requirements;
- Scope ANP programmes across the UK to inform the project report;
- Engage with stakeholders to make recommendations regarding changes to the education requirements and ANP programme delivery, reflective of the future needs of the profession, that can be used to inform and support the annual education commissioning cycle.

Phase 2:

- Explore current evaluation of ANP programmes in terms of educational priorities, processes and outcomes along with the potential for cost benefit analysis;
- Explore how current arrangements link in with existing career frameworks;
- Review the current ANP Framework to reflect the outcomes from the work listed above.

5.0 Scope

The project will be conducted using the above approach and will:

- Include all Advanced Nursing Practice roles and settings in NI
- Satisfy the requirements of the NMC Code (NMC, 2018) and any future review of post-registration standards for advanced practice
- Support the highest level of quality, patient/client safety and experience within all settings
- Incorporate the principles of co-production and co-design to maximise partnership working and stakeholder involvement.

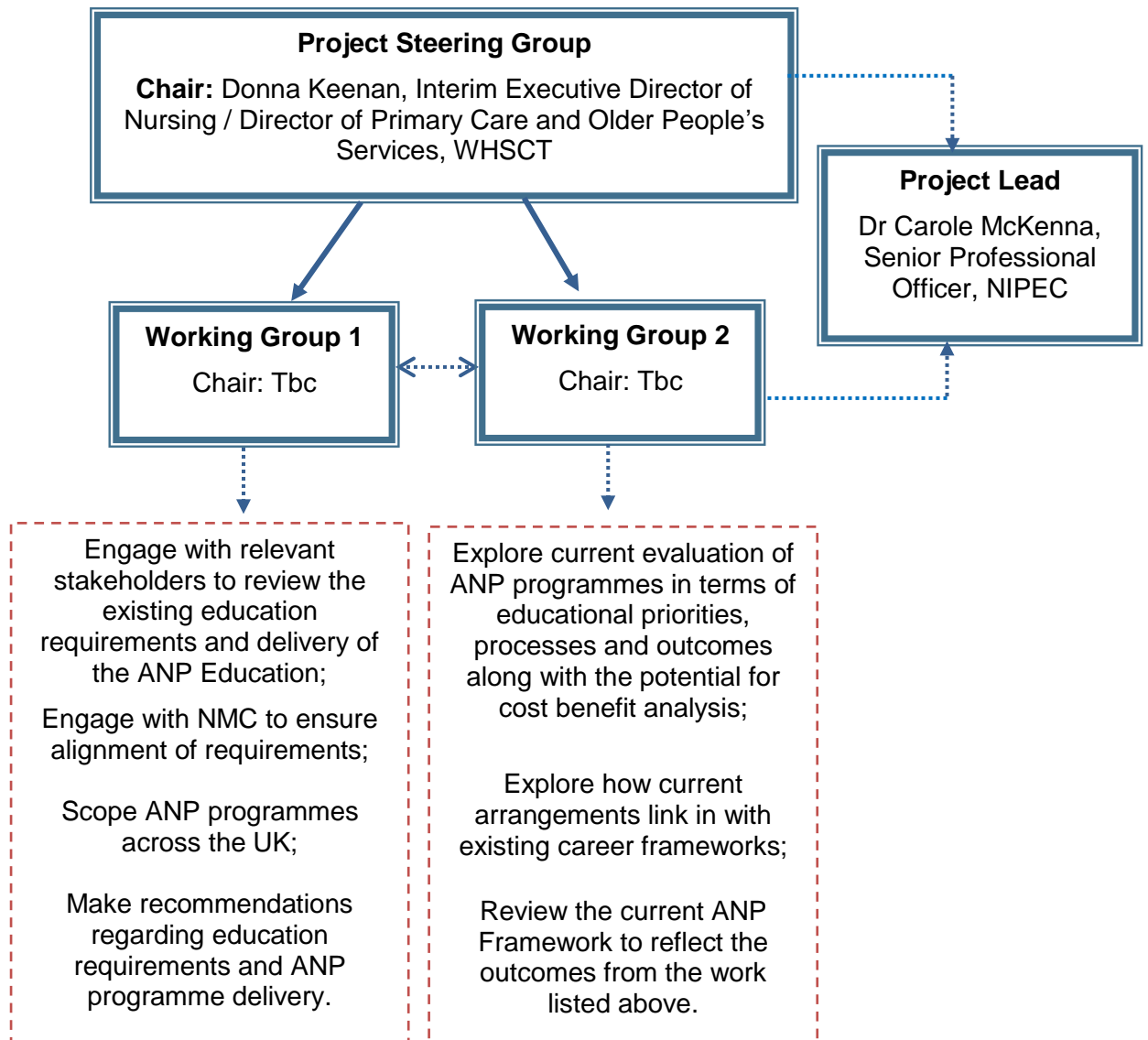
6.0 Methodology Overview

6.1 A Steering Group will be convened, chaired by an HSC Trust Executive Director of Nursing, to provide oversight and agree appropriate governance arrangements to support achievement of the project aims and objectives. Representation will be sought from senior nurses and midwives in HSC Trusts, DoH, PHA, Education Providers, Primary Care, Independent Sector, Patient Client Council (PCC), RCN, RCM, Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) and ANPs. The Steering Group will also progress the remainder of the programme of work, during Phase 2, to meet the agreed aim and objectives. Representation from the Directors of Human Resources and Finance Forums will also be invited to join the Steering Group on a co-opted basis.

6.2 A final project report will be published by NIPEC.

6.3 Evaluation of project management processes will be completed by NIPEC at the end of the Project.

7.0 Project Structure



8.0 PROJECT WORK PLAN AND TIMESCALES

Activity	Aug 2022	Sept 2022	Oct 2022	Nov 2022	Dec 2022	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	Mar 2023	Apr 2023
Draft Project Initiation Document (PID) and work plan based on CNO request									
Draft Steering Group Terms of Reference (TOR)									
Invitation to stakeholders to join Steering Group									
1 st Steering Group meeting to agree TOR, aims, objectives and workplan									
Review existing education requirements and delivery model of ANP education programmes in Northern Ireland									
Scope ANP programmes across the UK & ROI to inform the project report									
2 nd Steering Group meeting to progress workplan									
Organise and convene stakeholder workshop to consider ANP education requirements and model of programme delivery, reflective of future needs									
Engage with NMC to ensure alignment of future NMC regulatory requirements									
3 rd Steering Group meeting to progress workplan									
Consider/agree recommendations regarding recommendations re changes to ANP education requirements and programme delivery and links to annual education commissioning cycle.									
4 th Steering Group meeting to progress workplan									
Explore current evaluation of ANP programmes in terms of educational priorities, processes and outcomes along with the potential for cost benefit analysis									
5 th Steering Group meeting to progress workplan									
Explore how current arrangements link with existing career frameworks									
6 th Steering Group meeting to progress workplan									
Review the current ANP Framework to reflect the outcomes from the work listed above.									
Draft a report with recommendations regarding ANP education requirements and programme delivery, implementation plan, costings and timescales									
Final Steering Group meeting to agree final project report									
Final report to CNO									

9.0 Resources

9.1 NIPEC will provide professional project management and administrative support to the project.

10.0 Equality and Governance Screening

10.1 As required by Section 75, Schedule 9, of the Northern Ireland Act, 1998 Equality Screening will be carried out.

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 will be 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 will be documented in Appendix 4.

11.0 Dissemination

11.1 Communication and consultation processes will be used as appropriate to ensure effective engagement with key stakeholders.

12.0 Evaluation

12.1 Ongoing evaluation of the management of the project will be conducted through NIPEC. The evaluation will address the achievements of the objectives outlined in the project plan and the project management process.

References

DoH (2016) *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework: Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice In Health And Social Care Trusts*. Belfast: DoH

DoH (2016) *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*. Belfast: DoH.

DoH (2018) *Health And Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026. Delivering For Our People* available at [hsc-workforce-strategy-2016.pdf](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-and-social-care-workforce-strategy-2026) (health-ni.gov.uk) accessed on 5 January 2022 www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/health-and-social-care-workforce-strategy-2026

DoH (2019) *Transformation in Action: Advanced Nursing Practitioners in Northern Ireland* available at [https:// www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/transformation-action-advanced-nursing-practitioners-northern-ireland](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/news/transformation-action-advanced-nursing-practitioners-northern-ireland)

Giles, M., Parker, V. & Mitchell, R. (2014) *Recognising the differences in the nurse consultant role across context: a study protocol*. *BMC Nursing*; 13(30) available at <https://bmcnurs.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6955-13-30#:~:text=In%20international%20literature%20the%20Nurse%20Consultant%20role%20differs,leading%20practice%20change%20and%20research%20%5B%2010%20%5D.> accessed on 8 February 2022

ICN (2020) *Guidelines on Advanced Practice Nursing* available at https://www.icn.ch/system/files/documents/2020-04/ICN_APN%20Report_EN_WEB.pdf

Lockwood, E., Lehwaldt, D. Sweeney, M.R. & Matthews, A. (2021) *An exploration of the levels of clinical autonomy of advanced nurse practitioners: A narrative literature review* *International Journal of Nursing Practice*: Online ahead of print. Available at <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34109706/>

Mannix K, Jones C (2020) *Nurses' experiences of transitioning into advanced practice roles*. *Nursing Times* [online]; 116: 3, 35-38

National Leadership and Innovation Agency (2010) *Framework for Advanced Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Practice in Wales*. <http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/829/NLIAH%20advanced%20Practice%20Framework.pdf> accessed on 20 January 2022

NMTG (2020) *Nursing and Midwifery Task Group: Report and Recommendations*. Belfast: DoH.

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2018) *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*. London: NMC.

Draft Terms of Reference

Advanced Nursing Practice Project Steering Group

PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

The Project Steering Group is responsible to:

1. Agree the purpose of the project and provide a regional and professional perspective
2. Agree a project plan, timescales and methodology for the project
3. Provide expertise; oversee the implementation of the project and review of the outcomes
4. Ensure communication and dissemination of information relevant to the project within each of the participating organisations/professional groups.
5. Contribute to a final project report
6. Contribute to on-going implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the project outcomes.

MEMBERSHIP OF STEERING GROUP

Representation will be sought from senior nurses and midwives in HSC Trusts, DoH, PHA, Education Providers, Primary Care, Independent Sector, Patient Client Council (PCC), RCN, RCM, Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency (NIMDTA) and ANPs. Representation from the Directors of Human Resources and Finance Forums will also be invited to join the Steering Group on a co-opted basis.

If a member is unavailable, he/she should nominate an appropriate member of staff to attend on his/her behalf, providing the relevant required information in advance for the alternate member to attend and participate appropriately.

Members of the Project Steering Group will:

- Contribute their professional perspective to the review of the model for delivery of the ANP Education Programme and ANP Framework
- Participate in respectful debate, providing constructive challenge
- Provide, manage and analyse information related to the review, ensuring confidentiality when required
- Participate in shared learning across organisations
- Consult with individuals of appropriate expertise as required to inform the review of the framework
- Participate in electronic activity related to the production of a final report.

CHAIRING ARRANGEMENTS

The Project Steering Group will be chaired by Donna Keenan, Interim Executive Director of Nursing / Director of Primary Care and Older People's Services, WHSCT.

QUORUM

Quorate membership is 50% of the total membership number. The quorum should also reflect a balance of individuals from each organisation.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Meetings will be arranged in order to complete the activity which will be defined in an agreed work plan.

RECORD OF MEETINGS

NIPEC are responsible for agenda setting, record keeping and circulation of relevant papers in collaboration with the Chairs of the Groups.

Outcome of Screening Assessment

Screening Assessment	Comments
Risk Management questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have any risks been identified? <p>If no - no further action is required. If yes then,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the potential impact of these? • How can these be mitigated or have alternatives options been identified which would have a lower risk outcome? • Where negative impacts are unavoidable, has clarity been given to the business need that justifies them? 	No
Privacy Impact Assessment questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project/initiative use personal information and/or pose genuine risks to the privacy of the individual? • 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? 	No
Personal and Public Involvement questions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the project/initiative require input from patients/clients? <p>If no - no further action is required.</p> <p>If yes - please apply NIPEC's Personal and Public Involvement Policy.</p>	No

For further Information, please contact

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