



NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE & EDUCATION COUNCIL FOR  
NURSING & MIDWIFERY

**Access to Education  
for the Global Majority (Ethnically Diverse) in the  
Family of Nursing, Midwifery & Allied Health  
Professionals**

**ONLINE SURVEY REPORT**

**March 2025**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC), on behalf of the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the access to education for the global majority (ethnically diverse) in the family of nursing, midwifery and Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) in Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts. This is the third survey NIPEC has completed since 2022. As a result of the recruitment of the Professional Officers for Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion, from October 2023, NIPEC has been able to ensure active engagement with the nursing, midwifery and AHP teams in the HSC Trusts<sup>1</sup> for the 2024 survey returns therefore enhancing their accuracy.

The findings from the organisational survey returns were presented along with the outcome of the Ethnic Diversity staff survey at the second annual regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative workshop on 26 February 2025.

## **2.0 UNDERTAKING THE ORGANISATIONAL SURVEY IN 2025**

This was the fifth time the organisational survey was issued to the five HSC Trusts and the three Higher Education Institutes in NI. NIPEC's Professional Officers for Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion helped with gathering/analysing the data

The web-link to the organisational survey questions was emailed in December 2024 to the five HSC Trust EDoNs and their Nursing Workforce Leads, Midwifery, AHP and Human Resources (HR) Equality Leads; and the Heads of School of the three Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The survey closed on 31 January 2025.

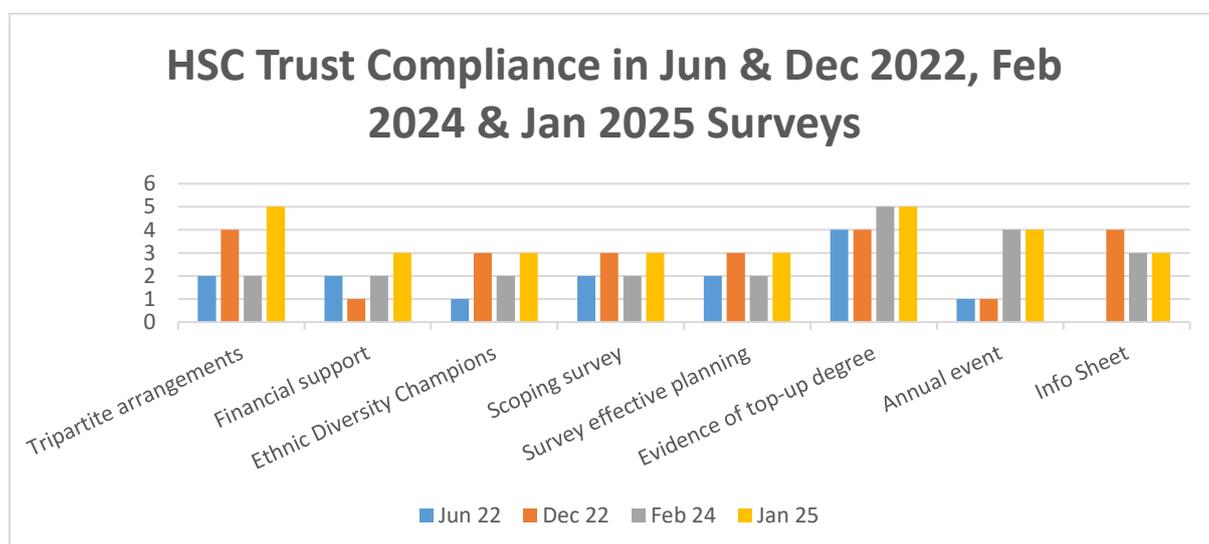
---

<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Trust was excluded from the organisational survey in 2025 as it was discovered during the Ethnic Diversity staff survey October 2024– January 2025 that they only employed two or three individuals from a global majority background. The recommendations however continue to apply to NIAS.

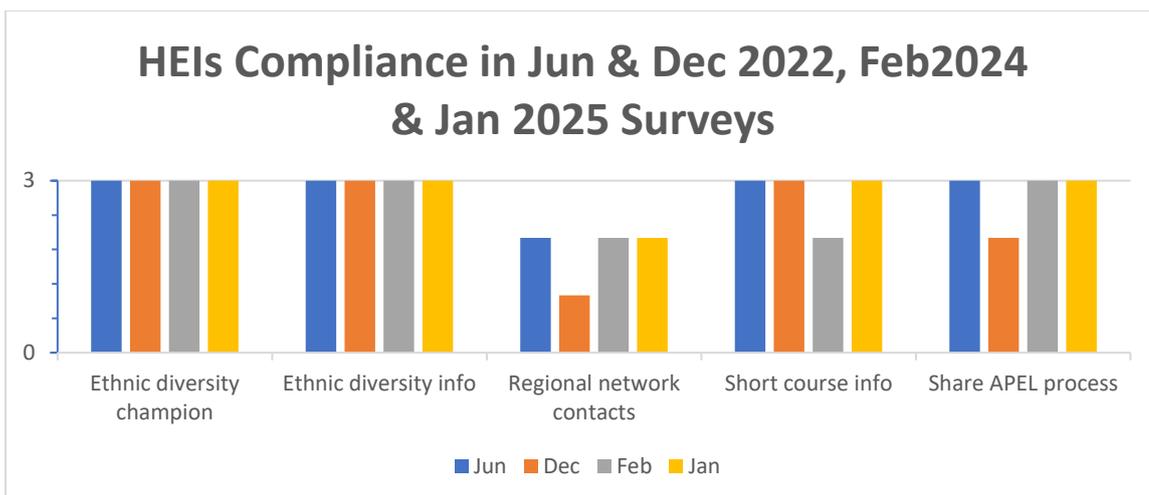
### 3.0 RESULTS OF THE ORGANISATIONAL SURVEY

The survey findings for the HSC Trusts show that much work is being undertaken to improve access to information regarding education and career development for staff from the global majority although some Trusts are having to balance this with the same provision for all staff. The Universities are further along in achieving compliance with their recommendations with only one University not being compliant with one of their five recommendations see Figures 1 and 2.

**Figure 1. HSC Trusts' compliance against recommendations in the June & December 2022, February 2024 & January 2025 surveys.**



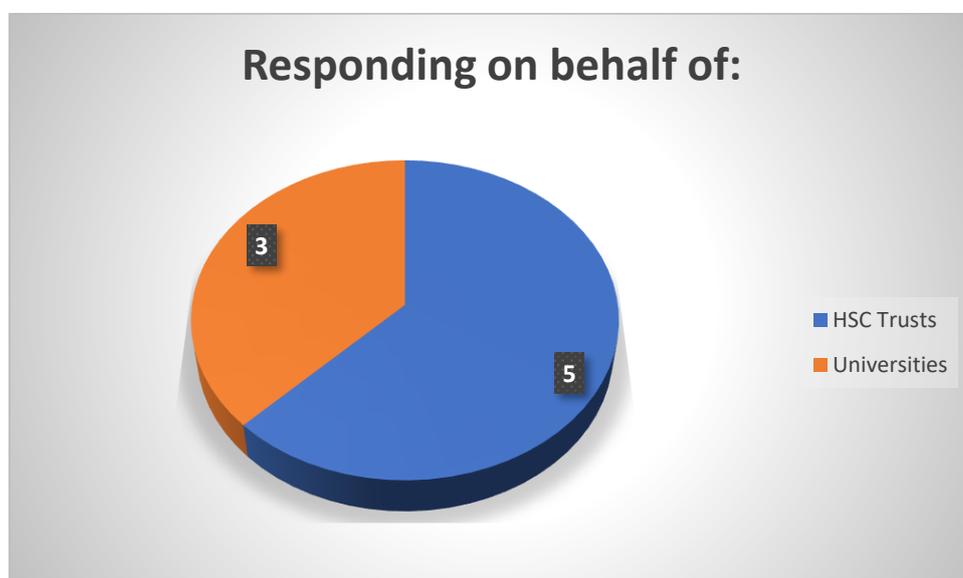
**Figure 2. Universities' compliance against recommendations in the June & December 2022, February 2024 & January 2025 surveys.**



### Survey Responses

It is important to note that this year a single organisational response was returned from each Trust on behalf of Nurses, Midwives and AHPs, see Figure 3. A summary table of the overall findings from the January 2025 survey is provided in Appendix 1.

**Figure 3. Number of organisations responded to the survey.**



### 3.1 HSC Trust Responses

**Q2. Tripartite arrangements established among HEIs/Trusts & Nursing/Midwifery/AHP Ethnic Diversity colleagues, linking across workforce, education and Human Resource (HR) departments<sup>2</sup>**

This is the first time that all five HSC Trusts confirmed that they had tripartite arrangements in place for ethnically diverse staff, although the Northern HSC Trust stated that this did not include AHPs (except for paramedics).

**Q4. Does your Trust provide financial support to Ethnically Diverse colleagues to attain the statement of comparability from UK ENIC<sup>3</sup>.**

Western, Southern and Northern HSC Trusts all confirmed they provided financial support for those who wanted to attain the statement of comparability, see Figure 4. In 2024 only two Trusts provided financial support.

These Trusts confirmed that funding for UKENIC is managed and agreed within the service team/division where the individual is employed. The Southern HSC Trust stated that each case is reviewed on an individual basis, based on budget, however all areas are very keen to cover the associated costs. The Western HSC Trust also stated AHPs did not require to attain this certification.

Belfast HSC Trust reported they do not provide financial support for staff to attain UK ENIC. Rather, staff are signposted to seek this when they attend the International Nurse Recruitment induction. Although the South Eastern HSC Trust reported they do not have Trust policy to fund attainment of UKENIC, individual service areas may provide financial support for staff.

Belfast HSC Trust also compared the difference between QUB and Ulster University in the awarding of CATS points for staff. For example, Ulster now award 20 CATs points for staff who have completed their OSCE through its Competency Test Centre (CTC).

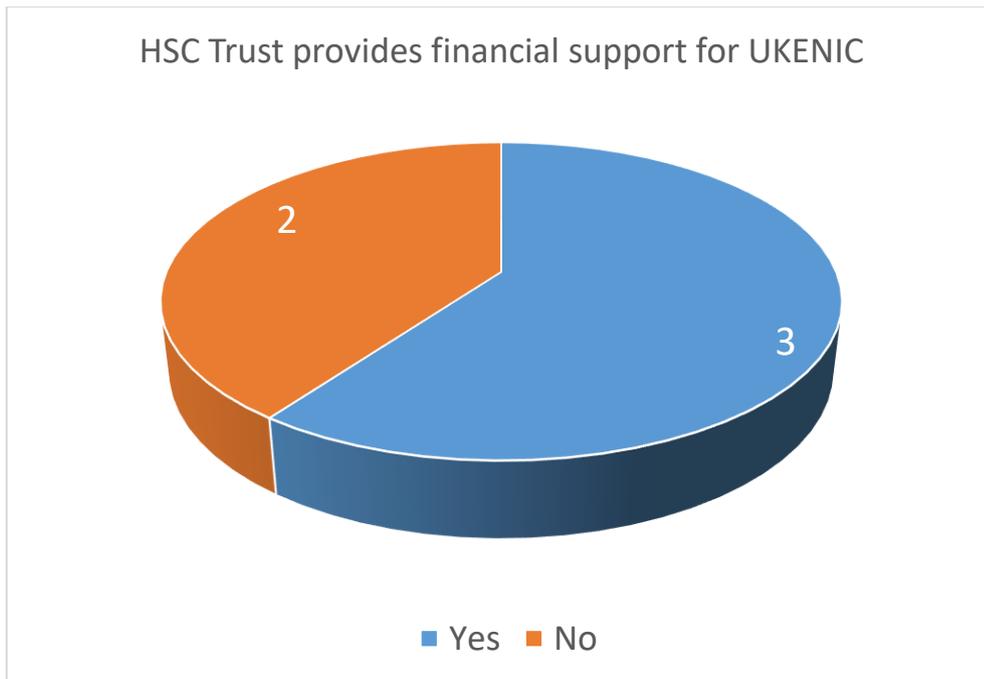
There is currently ongoing discussion in the regional Education Commissioning Group regarding a regional approach for the funding of attainment of UKENIC certification. This would be welcomed by the five HSC Trusts.

**Figure 4. HSC Trust provides financial support for UK ENIC**

---

<sup>2</sup> This question did not apply to support staff.

<sup>3</sup> UK ENIC is a leading information service provider offering impartial, trusted judgement on international qualifications



**Q6. Trusts have appointed an Ethnic Diversity Champion to link with Education Commissioning Group (ECG) contacts**

Belfast, Northern and South Eastern HSC Trusts all reported they had appointed an Ethnic Diversity Champion who had links with ECG contacts (Figure 5); of those in post, only the individual in the Northern HSC Trust is from an ethnically diverse background. The Northern HSC Trust advised that the NIPEC Professional Officer currently undertakes this role and through the Lead Nurse for Education and Practice Education Facilitators (PEFs) provides support to the regional implementation ECG plans.

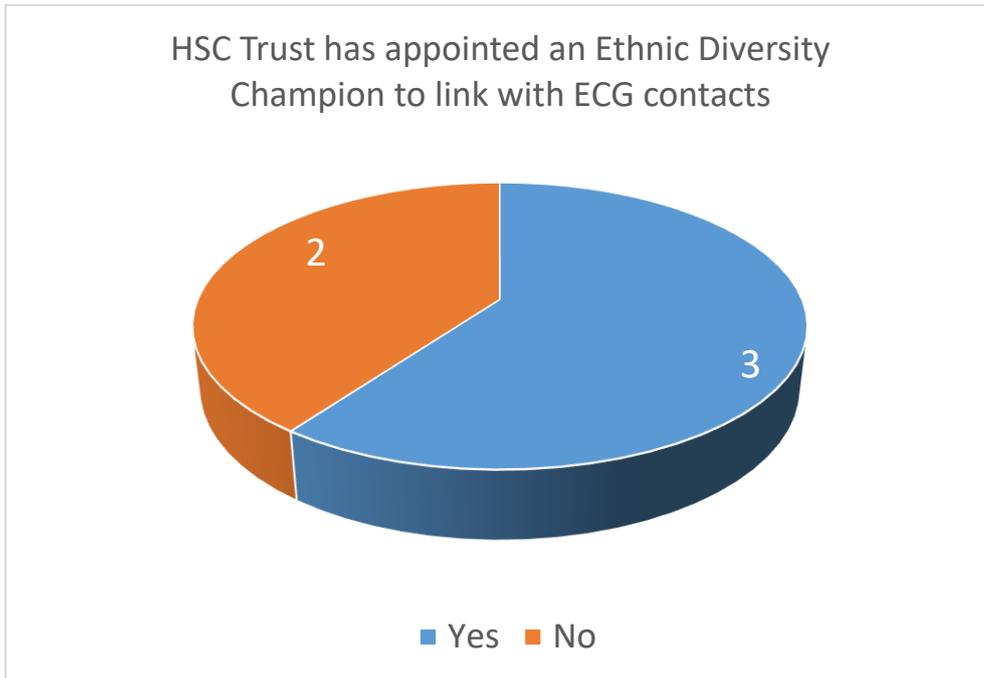
Southern and Western HSC Trusts do not have an Ethnic Diversity Champion appointed to link with ECG contacts, this is the same position as 2024.

Belfast HSC Trust highlighted that although the champion, PEF, is not from an ethnically diverse background they attend the “Ethnic Minority Staff Network” and acts as a source of information and conduit between colleagues for education, advice and feedbacks to team for Education Commissioning planning. AHP are also represented at the Network and are developing a similar process within their work stream.

Each directorate has a Divisional Nurse/Nurse Development Lead structure. These staff are responsible for scoping and submission of education requests including those from International staff.

Similarly, in South Eastern HSC Trust they reported that their lead PEF fulfils this role and links closely with the international nurse recruitment team.

**Figure 5. HSC Trust has appointed an Ethnic Diversity Champion to link with ECG contacts.**

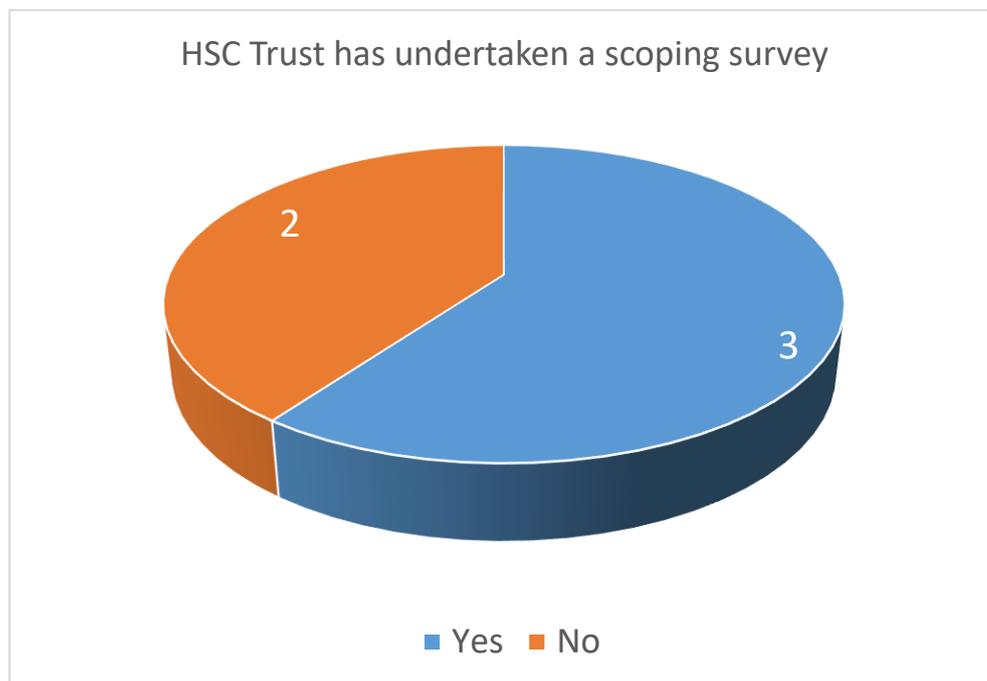


***Q9. Scoping survey has been undertaken regarding the educational needs of the Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health Professions or their Support staff employed within the Trust***

Belfast, Northern and Southern HSC Trusts replied that they had completed a scoping survey (see Figure 6) and they had also used this information to enable more effective planning to meet the needs of the ethnically diverse workforces of nurses, midwives, AHPs and the related support staff. However, the Northern and Southern HSC Trusts did not complete this for AHPs.

The Western HSC Trust reported that the current HRPTS system only enables recording of professional registration details for example Registered Nurse, Health Visitor or Registered Midwife. It doesn't facilitate recording of educational qualifications. The Trust's training/learning needs analysis process however allows for individual learning needs of staff to be captured in line with their current role within the context of commissioned educational programmes. Therefore, staff will be supported to complete additional study in order that they will meet the academic entry criteria and be able to apply for a commissioned programme, related to their role.

**Figure 6. HSC Trust has undertaken Scoping Survey**



***Q12. Evidence of need to commission a top up degree; or commissioned modules at undergraduate level with educational coherency, linking back to career planning.***

Similar to 2024, all the HSC Trusts confirmed they had evidence of the need to commission a top-up degree and all except South Eastern HSC Trust needed commissioned modules at undergraduate level. The Trusts gave examples of how they provided information for staff regarding accessing education.

The Northern HSC Trust held ECG workshops during the planning phase of the commissioning cycle. This allowed each division to undertake a learning needs analysis against their service, learning and staff profiles for those applying for ECG commissioned programmes. This includes top-up degrees and level 6 opportunities open to internationally educated staff. Divisional leads then are able to scope the numbers requiring to access further educational opportunities.

Southern HSC Trust delivered Nursing and Midwifery education information sessions and guided staff regarding the options available and the relevant courses required to access higher education.

Belfast HSC Trust reported that the information retrieved from the scoping survey is used to plan and support the education needs of all staff (inclusive

of the international registrants) and signpost them accordingly. This forms part of staff development plans. STRIVE (Supporting you; Teamwork; Resource signposting; Information; Validation; Empowerment and engagement) launched in July 2024. This was a series of monthly events planned in partnership with HR colleagues which provided support/information for culturally diverse colleagues in a wide range of topics including housing, health and well-being, career development.

Western HSC Trust also use their learning needs analysis process to scope the need for commissioned modules or top up degrees. However, they highlighted a difficulty which affects not only internationally educated staff and that is changes to the academic level of a commissioned education programme without any notice.

#### **Q14. Hosted an Annual Event**

All Trusts except Northern Trust held an annual event to provide information to ethnically diverse colleagues on the ECG processes/Career Pathways, access and development opportunities.

The examples of these were:

- Belfast HSC Trust held an International Nurse Welcome Event with representation from the Trust education team (currently under review). In addition, international staff will be invited to attend a Celebration Event, planned for early Summer 2025.
- South Eastern HSC Trust hosted a "grow your own" event for all staff.
- Southern HSC Trust held a very successful event for Nursing staff and included speakers from Workforce, Education, HR, Senior Leadership and Health and Wellbeing staff. It is planned that the next event will include AHP's and support staff.
- Western HSC Trust held CHAT sessions, online and face to face, every four weeks for internationally educated nurses and midwives. One session was dedicated to providing information on access to education. The Lead Nurse for Education and Development also hosted career clinics on request for all Nursing and Midwifery staff.

This year Northern HSC Trust reported that they did not have a specific event due to the implementation of Encompass. Their Practice Education Facilitators, and Workforce Education Facilitators were however visible across the Trust and when required promoted and provided information to ethnically diverse colleagues on the ECG processes/career pathways, access to education and development opportunities.

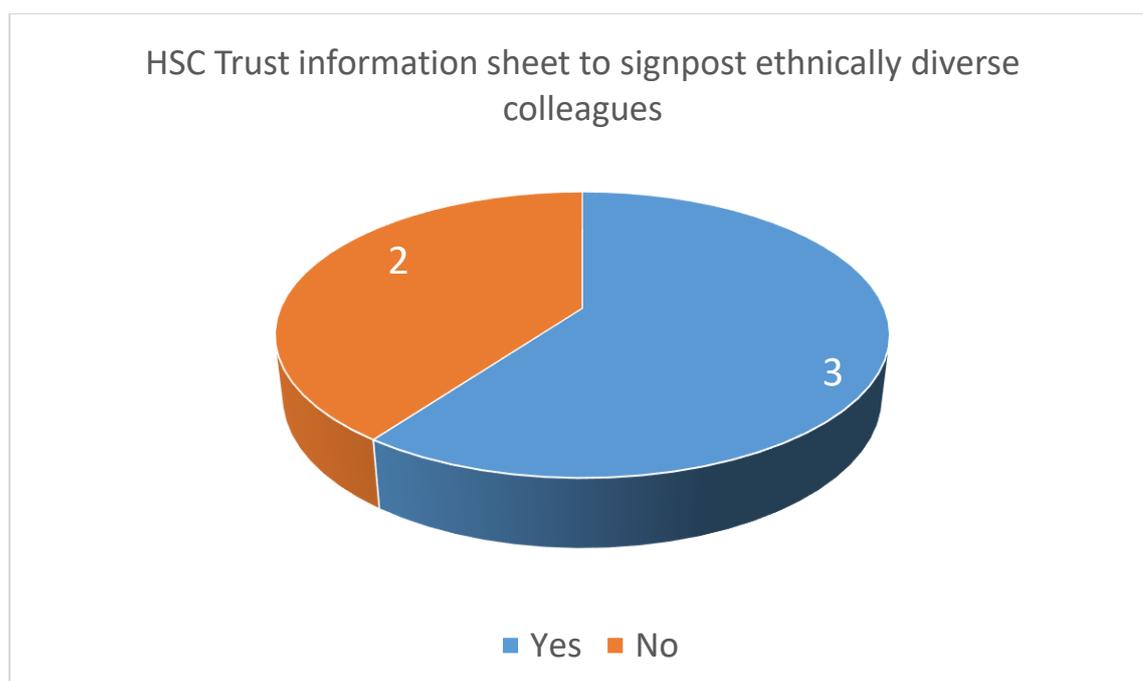
**Q16. Trust Information sheet to signpost ethnically diverse colleagues**

Belfast, Northern and Southern HSC Trusts all stated they had an information Sheet; see Figure 7. The examples of this were

- Belfast HSC Trust has a dedicated HR site providing information to ethnic diverse colleagues. Education and HR intranet pages are linked to signpost staff to information and support. In addition, information is shared with international staff as part of their induction. Information sessions are also held by the central nursing teams for all staff.
- Northern HSC Trust intranet has signposted to NIPEC resources and other education pathways such as Clinical Education Centre, [LearnHSCNI](#) and the HSC Trust's organisational development department.
- Southern HSC Trust has leaflets with signposting to the NIPEC website which are shared with all staff. All staff also have access to a local Trust SharePoint site and the leaflets and signposting is available here with additional resources. There is a yearly appraisal process in place which also incorporates Personal Development Planning (PDP); and 1:1 /group supervision for all staff.

The South Eastern and Western Trusts do not have an information leaflet. The South Eastern Trust's PEF team meet with operational leads to share the information which is to be cascade down to other staff. The Western HSC Trust does not have a specific information sheet however, they have an induction booklet for Band 5 nurses that provides insights to Professional Development Planning and Preceptorship.

**Figure 7. Trust Information Sheet to Signpost Ethnically Diverse Colleagues**



### ***Additional Comments by Trusts***

The Western HSC Trust commented that although they have an active ethnically diverse staff network that reports through to HR colleagues they would like guidance on how best to identify an ethnic diversity champion, the commitment required and how it would be funded.

Belfast HSC Trust reported that as a result of completing the survey they recognise that work carried out to support ethnically diverse staff should be part of a standard approach to the provision of education, integration and support for all staff.

The Southern HSC Trust provided additional information on what they are doing to support ethnically diverse staff. This included

- information sessions for interview preparation / skills and how to complete an application form.
- Establishment of a Voice Forum - a space for dialogue, inclusion and support.
- staff network “REaCH” which includes all ethnically diverse staff. In addition, this year they have piloted a buddy system to help newly recruited internationally educated staff settle into the Trust and Northern Ireland.
- a Diversity and Inclusion calendar and throughout the year various events for the ethnically diverse staff and their families to come together and two very successful Culture Night celebrations since 2023.
- a Human Library event which featured ethnically diverse colleagues sharing their life and work experiences of living in Northern Ireland.

The Northern HSC Trust commented that this year they were impacted by “Encompass go live”. They identified that there will be further ECG workshops in 2025 in addition to updating of Staffnet pages for ease of access to ECG information. This will include increased support for post-graduate staff on commissioned programmes to ensure ethnically diverse staff have the support and guidance needed to reach their full potential and support their continued learning journey in Northern Trust. They reported that resources were required to complete the survey for ethnically diverse AHPs.

### **3.2 AEI Responses**

***Q 18. Ethnic Diversity Champions have been identified in your organisation & Q19. Have Ethnic Diversity Champions, in your organisation, provided information for Ethnically Diverse colleagues to ensure opportunities for access to pre and/or post registration education?***

All three NI HEIs confirmed they have Ethnic Diversity Champions identified and they all have provided Ethnic Diversity colleagues with information to ensure opportunities for access to pre- and/or post-registration education. Queen’s University Belfast (QUB) stated that it provides the information for all students.

***Q 20. Has a regional Ethnic Diversity informal network of key contacts to help inform career planning and educational development been established?***

Both Ulster University and Open University (OU) have established a regional Ethnic Diversity informal network of key contacts to help inform career planning and educational development. QUB does not have this in place.

***Q 21. Has your HEI provided information regarding short courses and available modules for Ethnically Diverse colleagues in a consultancy/ supportive process?***

All three NI HEIs confirmed they have provided information regarding short courses and available modules for Ethnically Diverse colleagues in a consultancy/ supportive process.

***Q 22. Has your HEI a process to share information on the APEL process with Trusts for all Ethnically Diverse Nurses, Midwives, AHPs and support staff?***

All three NI HEIs confirmed they have a process to share information on the APEL process with Trusts for all ethnically diverse nurses, midwives, AHPs and support staff.

### ***Additional comments by AEIs***

The Universities provided some additional information to demonstrate how they are promoting access to education for the ethnically diverse workforces:

#### **Open University**

- The Open University offers two 'earn as you learn' routes:
  - i. The BSc Nursing route is available for any NHS staff members who would like to study and become nurses, at no cost to the student.
  - ii. A Certificate in Healthcare Practice, which is equivalent to Part 1 of the Nursing programme and is available to anyone delivering care directly to patients.
- The OU also offers grants and scholarships specifically aimed at the Global Majority students, to support the reduction of the awarding gaps. The School of Health Wellbeing and Social Care and Faculty also run the Black Student's Network and a student Peer Mentoring scheme, also aimed at students who are subject to the Awarding Gaps. The OU has developed an Inclusive Curriculum Tool, particularly focused on decolonisation of the curriculum, which is used in all modules to inform the curriculum.

The School has dedicated EDI Champions, including one for Nursing, and runs regular events to educate and address the issues of Awarding Gaps and wider EDI issues in HE. The Nursing EDI Champion is embedded in key strategic School meetings and advocates for inclusive curriculum and operational practices. The OU also has an Open Learn resource available to all, which includes short courses on Black Leadership and supporting Global Majority students.

#### **Ulster University**

The School of Nursing and Paramedic Science, highlighted that they have petitioned the university to develop a database to monitor any attainment gap due to gender and ethnicity and any other intersectionality. The school is part of the pilot project for this. In addition, Ulster has approved a 10-credit level 6 module that supports access to education at level 7 and we are also the first NMC approved Competency Test Centre in the United Kingdom to give academic credits for the OSCE process to enter the register with the NMC.

## **4.0 CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the information collected in the survey it is clear that a lot of work is underway in relation to facilitating access for nurses and midwives who are ethnically diverse, however there remains much to be taken forward for AHPs across the Trusts. The Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative has enabled sharing of good practice, systems and processes and will continue to help generate ideas to reduce challenges/barriers. Through the regional collaborative it is hoped to widen the good practice in HSC Trusts and HEIs and also to open this out to employers of ethnically diverse nurses, AHPs and support staff in the Independent Sector.

NIPEC's Project Board has completed the staff survey and just over 1,300 responses were received. The results of this will be reported on separately.

Suggested actions from the organisational survey are detailed in the recommendations below in order to progress this work further.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Recommendation Promote Access to Education and Leadership Opportunities**

1. NIPEC to continue with the Project Board to progress the work on monitoring and reviewing the access to education and leadership opportunities for the Ethnically Diverse workforces of Nurses, Midwives, AHPs and related support staff. This will continue the focus on promoting organisational compliance with the recommendations.
2. NIPEC Project Board to review the results of the staff survey and NIPEC Project Lead to share staff survey results with Trusts and Independent Sector and agree priority actions to promote access to education and leadership opportunities for ethnically diverse workforces, for example include UKENIC in organisational induction checklist.

3. NIPEC to develop a business case for a regional resource to engage with HSC Trusts, Education Providers and Independent Sector to promote access to education and leadership opportunities for the Ethnically Diverse workforces of Nurses, Midwives, AHPs and related support staff.
4. NIPEC to continue hosting the annual Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative workshop.

**Table 1. HSC Trust Responses summarised – January 2025 Organisation Survey**

HSC Trust	Tripartite Arrangements	Financial Support	Ethnic Diversity Champion	Scoping Survey undertaken	Scoping Survey effective planning	Evidence top up degree	Trust hosted annual event	Trust Info sheet to signpost Ethnic Diversity colleagues
Belfast	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Northern	Yes (Including paramedics except for other AHPs)	Yes	Yes	Yes (Not for AHPs)	Yes (Not for AHPs)	Yes	No	Yes (signposted for all)
South Eastern	Yes	No (but individual areas may)	Yes	No		Yes	Yes	No
Southern	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Western	Yes	Yes	No	No		Yes	Yes	No

**Table 2. HEI Responses summarised January 2025 Organisation Survey**

HEI	Ethnic Diversity Champions Identified	Ethnic Diversity Champions provided info	Ethnic Diversity network key contacts	Short Course Info for Ethnic Diversity	Share APEL Process info
Open University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Queen's University Belfast	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Ulster University	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes