



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

ONLINE SURVEY REPORT

April 2026

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Results of the Organisational Survey	2
2.1	Nursing and Midwifery Workforce	2
2.2	AHP Workforce	4
2.3	Higher Educational Institutions	5
3	Survey Responses from HSC Trusts	6
4	Survey Responses from Higher Educational Institutions	15
5	Conclusions and Recommendations	16

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 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 sixth organisational survey that has been completed by the five HSC Trusts and the three Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Northern Ireland. An MS Form containing the survey questions was emailed in January 2026 to the:

- five HSC Trust Executive Directors of Nursing, Midwifery and AHPs
- five Professional Leads for Nursing Workforce, Midwifery, and AHPs
- five HSC Trust Executive Directors of Human Resources (HR)); and
- three Heads of School of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Taking into consideration feedback from the five AHP leads, the option to submit a separate AHP response was facilitated as it was noted that answers from this particular cohort of staff will be very different to those provided for nursing/midwifery. All HSC Trusts, except Belfast HSC Trust availed of this opportunity; Belfast HSC Trust had already planned their response when the request was made.

It was clear from the survey results received, that not all of the questions were applicable to the AHP workforce and there were gaps in the information for those that were relevant. A specific survey for AHPs will therefore be developed for 2026/27. For a more detailed summary of the responses from AHPs see paragraph 2.2, in addition to information submitted in response to each of the HSC Trust questions.

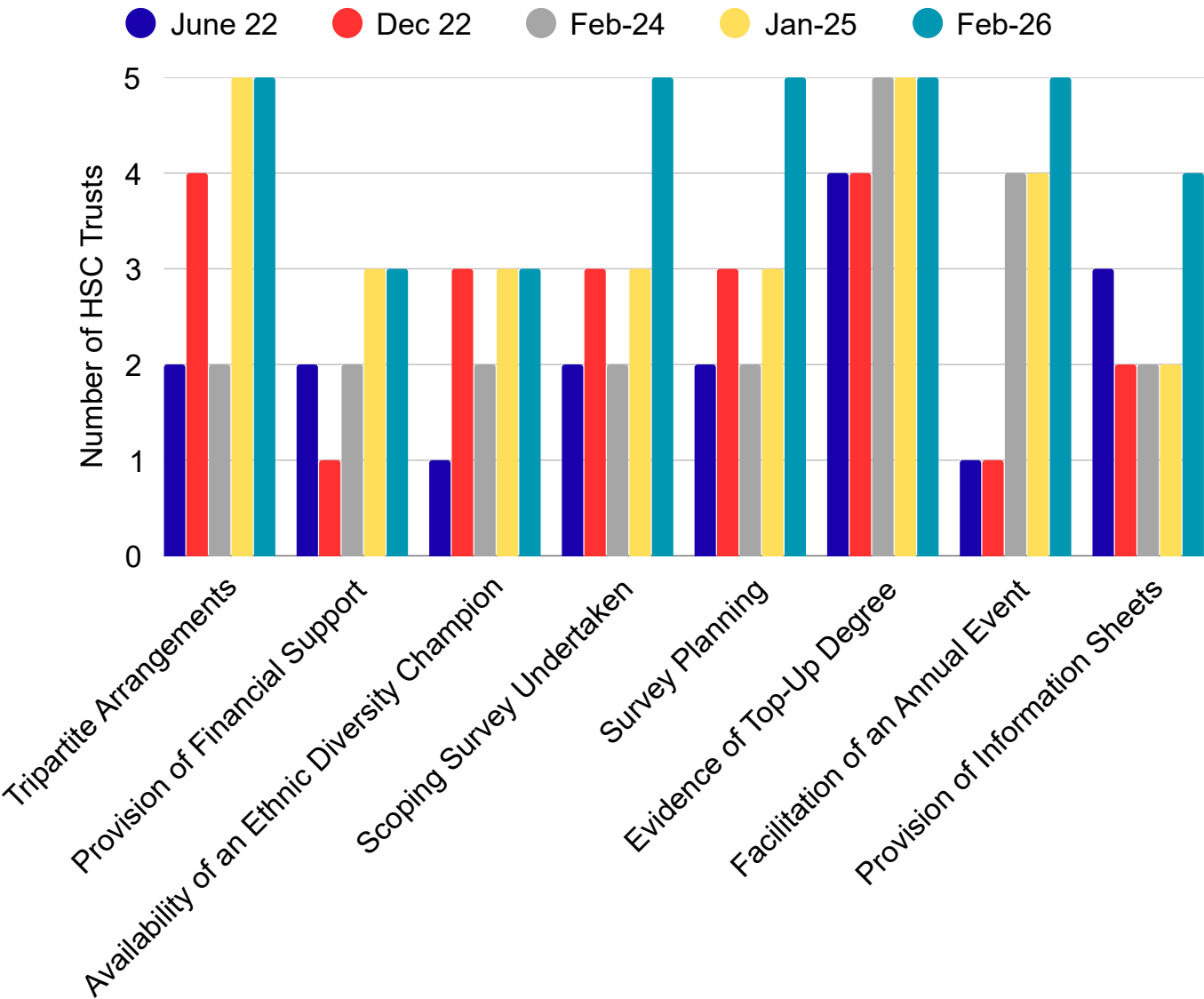
2.0 RESULTS OF THE ORGANISATIONAL SURVEY

2.1 Nursing and Midwifery Workforce

As illustrated within Figure 1, improvements have been made within all HSC Trusts, in comparison to 2025, to enhance access to information regarding education and career development, e.g the provision of Information Sheets and the facilitation of annual events for staff from a global majority background.

Furthermore, all HSC Trusts have indicated that they undertake scoping surveys to enable effective planning of the educational requirements of their workforce, however only the Western HSC Trust advised that they specifically scope the educational/training requirements of global majority staff. The other HSC Trusts conduct surveys for all staff regardless of background and from this, educational requirements for global majority staff are determined. The availability of financial support and the availability of Ethnic Diversity Champions remains in line with the 2025 results.

Figure 1. HSC Trust Compliance (2022 – 2026) for Nursing and Midwifery against the recommendations outlined within the 2021 Report



Recommendations contained within the 2021 Report

2.2 AHP Workforce

In comparison to nursing and midwifery, none of the Trust AHP Leads have conducted a scoping survey to ascertain the educational requirements specifically for global majority AHP staff. Northern HSC Trust and Southern HSC Trust explained this is because they don't have an AHP Learning and Development resource. However, like nursing and midwifery, training and educational requirements are discussed with all staff members at supervision and appraisals - including as and when required.

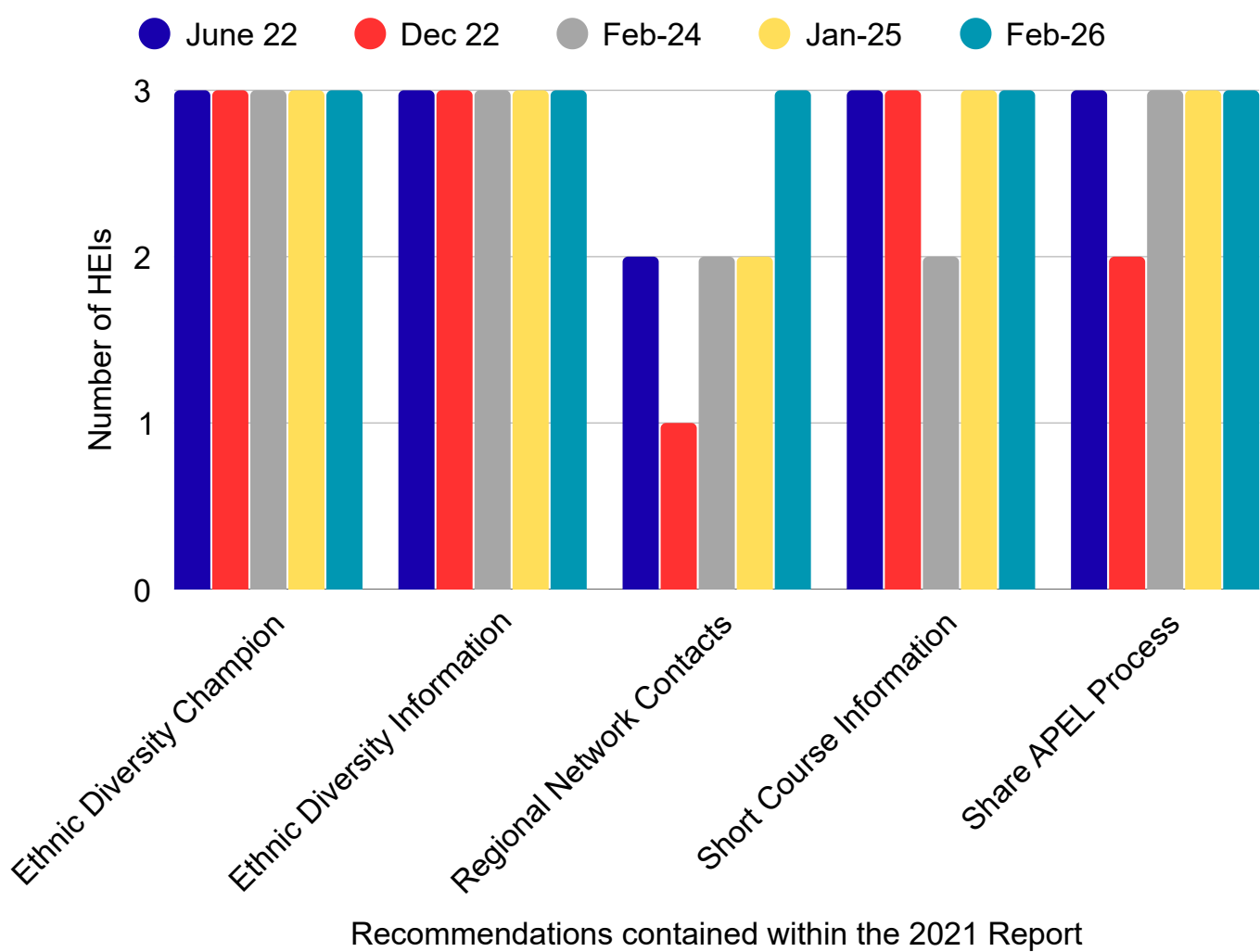
For the AHP workforce, two of the HSC Trusts (Belfast HSC Trust and Western HSC Trust) have information sheets for staff. In Belfast HSC Trust the internal webpage has a dedicated site providing information for ethnically diverse colleagues (regardless of profession). There is also a hub to provide communication, leadership and mental health advice. The Western HSC Trust also has an electronic hub where all staff can access information including AHP specific information to support development and career progression, available within each service. Within the Northern HSC Trust information is available for all staff regardless of profession or background, however there is nothing specific for AHPs.

In regards to financial support, only the Western HSC Trust has advised that it is available "as required by the individual service". None of the HSC Trusts host an annual event for AHPs on career and development opportunities, rather learning needs are addressed through appraisals. It is noted that AHPs share information on education commissioning processes and career pathways within the specific disciplines.

2.3 Higher Educational Institutions

In comparison to 2025, all three Universities are now compliant with their recommendations.

Figure 2: HEI Compliance for Nursing and Midwifery (2022-26) against Recommendations outlined within the 2021 Report



2.0 SURVEY RESPONSES FROM HSC TRUSTS

Question 1

Has your HSC Trust implemented the following recommendation?

HSC Workforce and Education Leads to create a tripartite arrangement among HEIs/Trusts and Nursing colleagues from the Global Majority, linking across Workforce, Education and HR Departments with measures to ensure monitoring and governance.

Response

All five HSC Trusts confirmed that they have tripartite arrangements in place for nursing/midwifery staff from a global majority background.

It was noted that this recommendation is not relevant to AHPs. Within all HSC Trusts, AHPs contribute to discipline specific education and training groups, and each discipline has a lead professional who inputs into the Department of Health Education Commissioning Group to support the planning, delivery and commissioning of post graduate training.

Additional information provided by HSC Trusts

Northern HSC Trust

The Northern HSC Trust, has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion network as well as an Ethnic Diversity Network, chaired by a staff member from the global majority background. In terms of education, the Trust supports the regional learning and development programme for ethnically diverse staff delivered through the HSC Leadership Centre. Furthermore, Practice Education and Workforce Education Facilitators support ethnically diverse nurses during their preceptorship, with their clinical skills and competency development. Contact is maintained with AEI's during the education commissioning cycle to determine suitability of staff to enrol on courses.

Belfast HSC Trust

The Belfast HSC Trust, holds a series of monthly meetings for internationally educated staff, called "STRIVE": Supporting you; Teamwork; Resource signposting; Information; Validation; Empowerment and Engagement. These meetings provide information on HR, health and wellbeing, fraud and Indefinite Leave to Remain.

The Trust also continues to work in partnership with the Police Service NI, for staff affected by racist attacks. Moreover, the Trust's commitment to promoting and supporting colleagues from ethnically diverse backgrounds, was recognised with the Trust of Sanctuary Award.

In regards to education, regular contact is made with universities during the education commissioning cycles to determine suitability of courses, based on previous education attainment.

Southern HSC Trust

The Southern HSC Trust is continuing to establish Workforce Café sessions, focusing on the global majority workforce to provide access to relevant information relating to the Trust and wider community. Indefinite Leave to Remain roadshows were held in addition to education awareness sessions to provide information relating to accessing Higher Education and Post Graduate study. A staff network has also been developed (REACH), which meets regularly.

South Eastern HSC Trust

The South Eastern HSC Trust has a multicultural forum which is open to all global majority staff regardless of profession. An annual celebration event is also held for staff and families.

Western HSC Trust

Western Trust holds a series of two monthly meetings for Internationally Educated Nurses and Midwives called "CHAT" – Connecting, Helping, Asking and Thrive". These meetings have been coordinated by the International Nurse Coordinator providing a forum or safe space for Internationally Educated Nurses and Midwives to discuss topics for personal and professional development. Topics include HR Terms and Conditions, staff health and well-being, joining trade unions and pensions, post-registration academic studies, financial awareness, finding accommodation, Indefinite Leave to Remain, UK ENIC and leadership opportunities.

The Trust's Ethnically Diverse Staff Network meets every 6 weeks, co-chaired by staff from global majority workforce. In terms of education, the Trust supports the regional learning and development programme for ethnically diverse staff delivered by HSC Leadership Centre. In addition, the International Nurse Coordinator along with the Lead Nurse for Education and Workforce facilitate career clinics for Internationally Educated Nurses and Midwives, including interview preparation sessions.

Question 2

Does your HSC Trust provide financial support for global majority colleagues to attain the statement of comparability from UK ENIC?

Response

As per the 2025 position, the Western HSC Trust, Southern HSC Trust and Northern HSC Trust confirmed that they provide financial support for Nurses and Midwives who want to obtain a “Statement of Comparability”. It is important to note however that the Western HSC Trust indicated that this is a service-based decision and South Eastern HSC Trust stated that some sub-directorates may support individuals.

The Belfast HSC Trust position remains the same as per 2025, i.e. financial support is not provided, rather, staff are signposted to seek UK ENIC when they attend the International Nurse Recruitment induction. They have also compared the difference between Queens University Belfast, (QUB) and Ulster University (UU) in the awarding of Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) points for staff. For example, Ulster award 20 CATS points for staff who have completed their OSCE through its Competency Test Centre (CTC). Further, it is noted that the Trust’s “Post Education Framework for Nursing and Midwifery” is currently under review.

In respect of AHPs, none of the HSC Trusts provide this cohort of staff with financial support, apart from Western HSC Trust who, as outlined above, have indicated that this is provided “as required by an individual service”.

Question 3

In your HSC Trust, have you a dedicated staff member or Champion with responsibility for global majority staff from a global majority background?

Response

South Eastern HSC Trust and Northern HSC Trust have confirmed that they have a staff member or champion with responsibility for global majority nursing/midwifery staff who are from a global majority background.

Conversely, Belfast HSC Trust, has indicated that there is no one designated Champion, rather there are leads within Human Resources (HR) Education, Workforce, AHP and Divisions.

Within the Western HSC Trust the position remains as per previous years, i.e. they do not have a global majority “Champion”. They do however have an International Nurse Coordinator from a Global Majority background. Similarly, the Southern HSC Trust acknowledged that they do not have a “Champion,” however, a role descriptor is currently being developed to support the implementation of Ethnic Diversity Champions within the forthcoming year.

In regards to AHPs, as outlined above, the South Eastern HSC Trust have a Multicultural Forum with a global majority champion; Northern HSC Trust have an Ethnic Diversity Network and Belfast HSC Trust have an Ethnic Staff Network at which AHPs are represented as well as ensuring AHP representation at quarterly “Education and Regulation Divisional Partnership” meetings.

Question 4

In your HSC Trust have you a dedicated staff member or Champion with responsibility for global majority staff to link with Education Commissioning Group (ECG) contacts?

Response

In line with the response above, South Eastern HSC Trust, Northern HSC Trust and Belfast HSC Trust confirmed that they have a dedicated staff member/Champion with responsibility for global majority nursing/midwifery staff to link with ECG contacts. Western HSC Trust and Southern HSC Trust do not.

Similarly, none of the HSC Trusts have a colleague undertaking this role while representing AHP global majority staff.

Question 5

Has your HSC Trust undertaken a scoping survey of the educational needs of the global majority Nursing, Midwifery, Allied Health Professions or their Support staff employed in your HSC Trust?

Response

Only the Western HSC Trust indicated that it has undertaken a scoping survey to specifically ascertain the educational needs of global majority staff.

In the other HSC Trusts, this information is captured via staff appraisals and a learning needs analysis for all staff regardless of background/profession. In addition, the Northern HSC Trust indicated that staff would often link with the Lead Nurse for Education, to discuss education routes and options available and 1:1 advice and support is provided upon request. Within the South Eastern HSC Trust managers are encouraged to have conversations with staff who may need their UK ENIC completed. Within Belfast HSC Trust, scoping is completed for all NMC registrants and AHPs for their educational needs and staff are supported through induction and nursing preceptorship as required. Extra support is provided for revalidation, and through career and education workshops and Indefinite Leave to Remain workshops.

As detailed within the responses provided to Question 6, Belfast HSC Trust, Northern HSC Trust, Southern HSC Trust and South Eastern HSC Trust each use this information to evidence the requirement for Top-Up Degrees; Commissioning of a Module and/or a Programme at Level 6.

For AHPs, Belfast HSC Trust advised that staff within physiotherapy have developed a support programme to enhance induction. If successful, it this will be rolled out across the AHP workforce.

Question 6

Did you use the information gathered in the scoping survey to enable effective planning to meet the needs of global majority nursing, midwifery & AHP registrants & related support staff and signpost them accordingly?

Response

Whilst scoping surveys specifically for colleagues from a global majority background are not undertaken, the information that is gathered is used to effectively plan and determine the courses/training required for nurses and midwives. This information also informs staff development plans (Southern HSC Trust) and Divisional leads are encouraged to scope the number of staff who require the top up course to access further educational opportunities (Northern HSC Trust).

Question 6a

Was there evidence of the requirement for;

- ***Commissioning of a Top Up Degree***
- ***Commissioning of a Module/Programme at Level 6***
- ***Other***

Response

All Trusts have indicated that surveys undertaken highlight the requirement for Commissioning of a Top-Up Degree; Programme of Study at Level 6 and Commissioning of a Module. In addition, the following information was provided;

Northern HSC Trust:

- ECG discussions occur with all divisions during the planning phase of the commissioning cycle. This ensures each division has considered their learning needs analysis using a profiling system reviewing service profile, learning profile and staff profile for all staff applying for ECG commissioned programmes. This includes awareness of top up degree programmes; level 6 opportunities; and use of Ulster University OSCE credits available to all Internationally Educated staff.

Southern HSC Trust:

- 23 global majority staff have been supported via ECG in 2025/2026 to undertake a variety of post-registration/graduate programmes including Short courses and Stand-Alone Modules. Two of these staff were identified as requiring a top up degree but the remaining 21 are studying at Level 7.

Question 7

Has your HSC Trust hosted an annual event/events to provide information to nurses, midwives, AHPs, and related support staff, from a global majority background on the Education Commissioning Group processes/Career Pathways, access to education and development opportunities?

Response

All HSC Trusts held either an annual event or events for nurses and midwives throughout the year to provide information to global majority staff on the ECG process, career pathways and education/development opportunities.

Examples include;

- An International Mental Health Nurse Event hosted by Belfast HSC Trust with information disseminated to international nurses via the International Nurse Workforce Team and at the Ethnic Staff Network. The Trust's Education Team also participate in Nursing Recruitment days to provide information on education and career development.
- Northern HSC Trust hosted an Internationally Educated Nurse and Midwife recognition event for all roles and bands.
- South Eastern HSC Trust didn't host an event specifically for colleagues from the global majority, rather events were held for all Nurses and Midwives regardless of background, e.g Grow your Own
- Southern HSC Trust offer rolling education awareness sessions providing guidance on accessing higher education and postgraduate study. Workforce Café sessions were also held, focusing on the global majority workforce and how they can access higher education.
- The Western HSC Trust's Ethnically Diverse Staff Network host an annual event. Further, CHAT sessions are held throughout the year to provide information regarding career pathways, education, leadership and promotional opportunities.

The Trust AHP Leads reported that due to the lack of learning and development infrastructure for AHPs, HSC Trusts do not have capacity to host events specifically for colleagues within these roles. Rather, information is shared on the education commissioning process/career pathways/opportunities with all staff within specific disciplines. The learning needs of all staff are addressed via annual appraisals.

Question 8

Has your HSC Trust an Information Sheet to signpost Nurses, Midwives, AHPs and related support staff, from a global majority background to areas that may assist with issues such as: Personal Development Planning and appraisal processes; NIPEC information on career planning and frameworks?

Response

The Belfast HSC Trust, Northern HSC Trust and Western HSC Trust all confirmed that they have Information Sheets in place.

Examples include;

- Belfast HSC Trust have an internal Trust webpage with a dedicated HR site providing information to all ethnic diverse colleagues. Education and HR intranet pages are linked to signpost staff to information and support. There is also a support hub for global majority staff to include information on communication, leadership and mental health resources for global support staff. Further, information sessions are held by the central nursing teams which are open to all staff.
- Northern HSC Trust advised that there is a Post-Registration Education Commissioning policy and appraisal processes guidance available for all staff. On the Trust intranet 'Staffnet' pages are available which signpost all nursing and midwifery staff to NIPEC resources including the new NIPEC 'Career and Development Model for Nursing and Midwifery' and the NIPEC 'Learning and Development Matrix'. AHPs have access to generic information and support.

- Western HSC Trust has a hub where all staff to include AHPs can access information. An Ethnically Diverse Staff Network is available to include monthly CHAT sessions. Service specific personal development planning and career pathway information is available locally within the service. The Ethnically Diversity Staff Network has a dedicated share-point and “We are West” App.
- South Eastern HSC Trust and Southern HSC Trust have indicated that they do not have an information sheet in place to signpost nurses and midwives, rather generic information is available for all staff irrespective of their background.

Additional Information

The following additional information has been noted from the HSC Trusts

Southern HSC Trust

- The introduction of Workforce Café Sessions and the continued roll-out of Education Awareness Sessions has been positively received. HR colleagues have worked with staff to develop a staff network called “REACH”, to support ethnically diverse colleagues which meets regularly and hosts an annual cultural celebration event. The development of a role descriptor for an Ethnically Diverse Champion is also a positive development.

Northern HSC Trust and South Eastern HSC Trust

- It is recognised that the Trusts wish to scope the global majority workforce and provide appropriate support, within a learning and development framework, as presented to the DoH Advisory Committee for AHPs.

Belfast HSC Trust

- It is recognised that 10% of the Band 5 AHP Physiotherapy workforce are internationally educated staff. A Support and Learning Plan for this cohort of staff was finalised in September 2025 and shared with AHP, Nursing and HR colleagues.

Western HSC Trust

- There is an increasing membership and engagement with the Trust’s Ethnically Diverse Staff Network from the global majority workforce. Food of the world where recipes shared by the global majority workforce are made available in the hospital canteen. The languages of the world event facilitated by International Nurse Coordinator and staff health and well-being team was a huge success.

4.0 SURVEY RESPONSES FROM HEIs

The results from the surveys of the three HEIs QUB, UU and Open University (OU) confirmed that they are fully compliant with all of their recommendations.

To summarise, they all have;

- Ethnic Diversity/Global Majority Champions who provide information to students to ensure opportunities for access to pre and post registration education;
- Regional Ethnic Diversity/Global Majority informal networks of key contacts to help inform career planning and educational development have been established;
- All provide information regarding short courses and available modules for students/potential students from a Global Majority background in a consultancy/supportive process; and
- They all have a process to share information on the APEL/RPEL process with Trusts for all Global Majority Nurses, Midwives, AHPs and support staff

In addition to the above, UU noted that their innovative level 6 study skills 10 credit module has been well received as a route to level 7 education.

In respect of OU, they advised that two 'earn as you learn' routes are available. The BSc Nursing route is available for any NI HSC staff members (plus independent sector students if the employer is agreeable to cover student fees) who would like to study and become nurses, at no cost to the student. They also have 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 HWSC 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. Further an Inclusive Curriculum Tool has been developed 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.

5.0 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 more work requires to be undertaken to understand the need for AHPs across the five HSC Trusts. Following discussion with the CNO, it has been agreed that the Chief AHP Officer, DoH will take forward the responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the access to education and leadership opportunities of the ethnically diverse AHP workforce and related support staff.

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 work of NIPEC's Project Board for Ethnic Diversity and the annual Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative Workshop it is hoped to widen the good practice in HSC Trusts and HEIs and also to share this with employers in the Independent Sector.

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

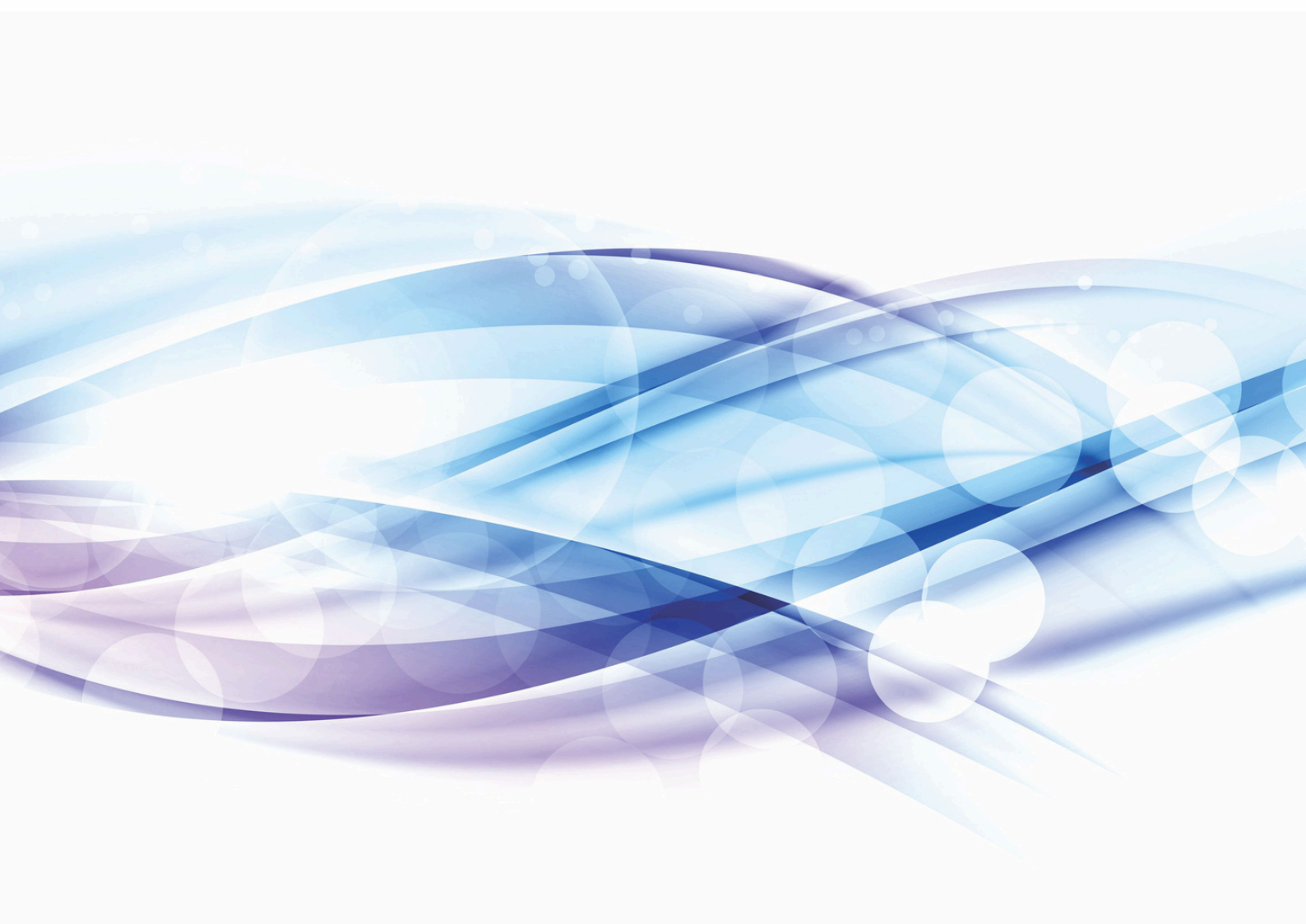
Recommendations

- NIPEC to continue with the Project Board to progress the work on monitoring and reviewing access to education and leadership opportunities for the Ethnically Diverse workforce of Nurses, Midwives, and related support staff. This will continue the focus on promoting organisational compliance with the recommendations.

- Key principles to be developed for the role of a HSC Trust Ethnic Diversity Champion
- HSC Trusts to promote cultural competence training
- HSC Trusts to promote career and development information specifically for ethnically diverse staff
- NIPEC to continue hosting the annual Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative workshop, to include the promotion of the NI Career and Development Model
- Review the Ethical framework for the recruitment and retention of internationally educated health professionals in Canada (2025), and identify elements which maybe relevant for the global majority workforces of Nurses, Midwives, and related support staff in NI.



Career & Development Model
for Nursing & Midwifery



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