



**NORTHERN IRELAND PRACTICE AND EDUCATION
COUNCIL FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY**

**Engagement and Communications
Strategy**

April 2021

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

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Introduction

NIPEC's core business is clearly laid out and reported on within our Corporate and Business Plans and our Quality and Annual Reports¹. These documents reflect how we will continue to communicate, engage, involve and collaborate in partnership with our stakeholders² that will assist in supporting the improvement of standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives.

This Strategy, which describes the values and principles governing our external and internal communication and engagement activities and the communication tools we will use, should be read in conjunction with our corporate documents.

Our Strategy is informed by and reflects the principles within relevant guidance and legislation, including the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UKGDPR) 2018, Freedom of Information (FOI) 2000, and the Code of Practice on Protecting the Confidentiality of Service User Information (2012).

Our engagement and communication goal

Good communication and engagement is essential in supporting our aim for openness and transparency and our communications approach will reflect the core values of our organisation in how we work and how we engage with our internal and external stakeholders.

Effective communication with our internal and external stakeholders is important in ensuring they are aware of, engage with, understand our role and are supportive of our organisation and our objectives. We will work in partnership with our stakeholders in an innovative and accountable way demanding excellence in everything that we do.

In planning and carrying out communication with our stakeholders, we will look to good practice and guidance including that outlined within Modern Public Sector Communications in NI (2018). We will also take account of and follow the Department of Health's Co-production Guide (2019) which requires all HSC organisations to effectively work in partnership with our stakeholders including staff, their representatives, local communities and multi-agency partners.

Strategic context

NIPEC was established in 2002, as an Arm's Length Body (ALB) which undertakes commissioned and non-commissioned work on behalf of the Department of Health, our sponsoring body, and other statutory organisations.

We are strategically and appropriately placed to translate regional direction and policy into practice. Due to its core functions and the strategic positioning and breadth of its stakeholder base, we are well placed to create high quality innovative solutions which aim to support employers as well as nursing and midwifery staff, enhance professional practice and, in turn, facilitate the delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care.

¹ From herein, these will be referred to as our Corporate documents

² Please refer to our Stakeholder Map on page 4

As outlined in our corporate documents, our key strategic objectives are to promote:

- high standards of practice among nurses and midwives
- high standards of education and learning for nurses and midwives
- professional development of nurses and midwives

and provide:

- guidance on the best practice for nurses and midwives
- advice and information on matters relating to nursing and midwifery.

Our values

Our values outlined below underpin everything we do at NIPEC



Aim

Our overall aim is to deliver effective communication and engagement that is accurate, timely, relevant and reliable through a range of appropriate methods and formats which support the delivery of the strategic objectives detailed in our corporate documents.

The core aims of this strategy are to:

- be proactive in engaging and communicating with our internal and external stakeholders
- strengthen our relationships with all our stakeholders
- maintain and enhance our profile and strengthen our identity with registrants and within the health and social care sector
- ensure that communication is co-ordinated and focused to meet the needs of our stakeholders.

We will also strive to achieve an organisational culture, reflective of the HSC Leadership Strategy (2017) where our:

- staff are valued, informed, educated, engaged and supported in their communication activities
- policies, strategies and decisions are communicated in an open, accurate and timely fashion

- reputation as an employer and service provider is highly regarded by our staff, nurses and midwives and other key stakeholders.

Our stakeholders

The importance of engaging, involving, communicating and working with our stakeholders, internal and external, is central to this strategy and to the work we do. The stakeholder map in figure 2 has been developed to illustrate the breadth of our stakeholders, but as we operate in a dynamic environment, it will be kept under review and amended to reflect any changes as these are identified.

In the last number of years we have actively enhanced our engagement and communication processes and partnership arrangements to accomplish our statutory functions.

In 2017-2018 NIPEC changed its approach to stakeholder engagement and completed a series of Road Shows in the five HSC Trust locations which included the statutory and independent sectors across Northern Ireland. This fulfilled the objective to meet frontline nurses and midwives and raise their awareness about NIPEC's projects and related resources. NIPEC also hosted Twitter chats with project leads and key stakeholders which resulted in increased engagement through Twitter, Facebook and visits to our main website.

A summary of this activity is published each year in our Communication and Engagement Report.

We are also a member of *'Engage'*, a central resource for involvement in Health and Social Care. This enables us to seek engagement from others on relevant projects and provides opportunities to encourage others to be involved in our work.

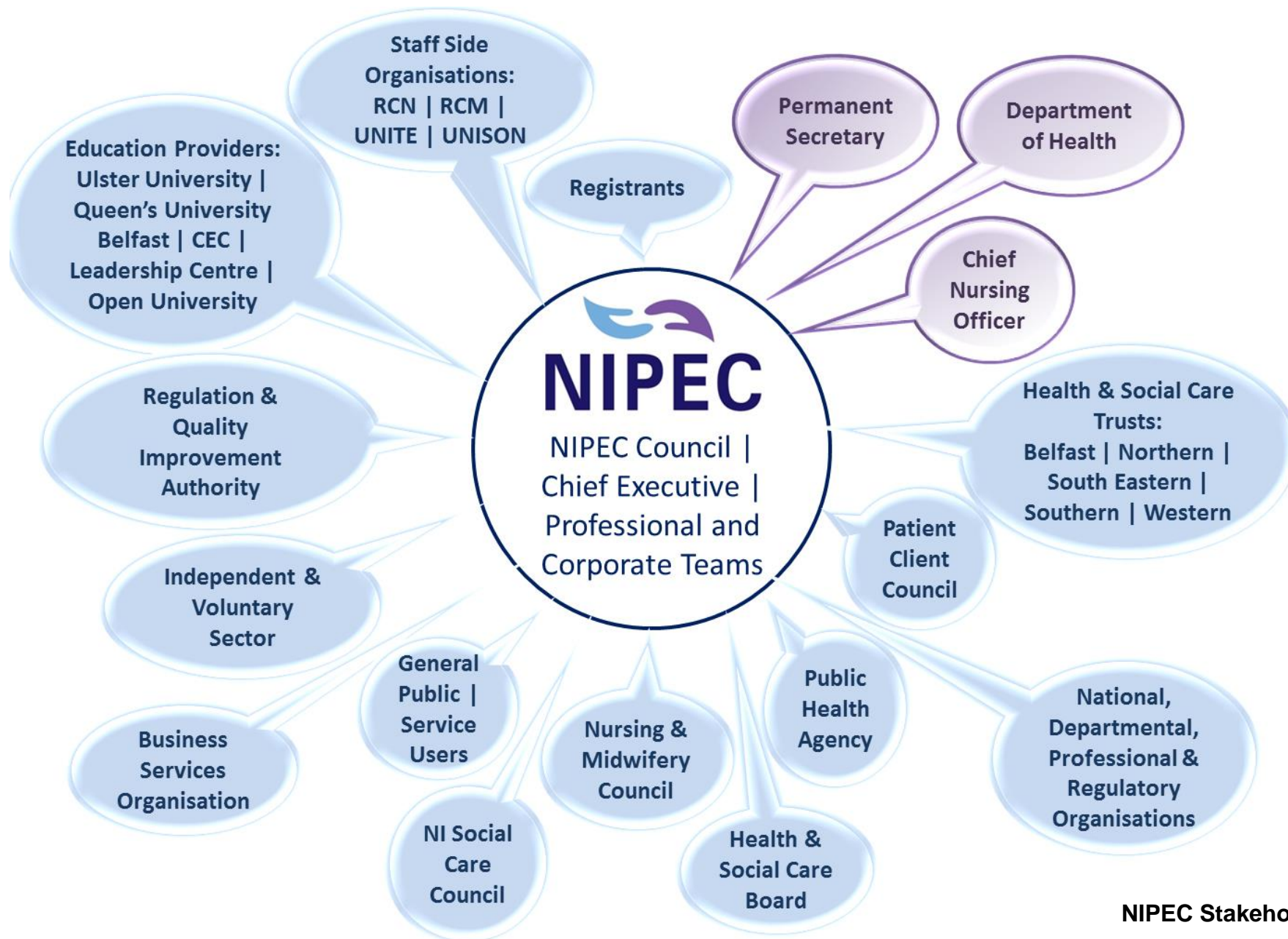


Figure 2:
 NIPEC Stakeholder Map

Our staff

Our staff is our greatest asset and one we wish to continue to involve, engage, empower, develop and support as they assist the organisation in achieving NIPEC's quality, strategic and business objectives. All staff should feel they are kept informed, valued and have the opportunity to influence the planning and decision making processes within the organisation.

Well informed and motivated staff are better placed to contribute to the effectiveness of the organisation and can actively participate in the improvement of our services. In 2021, we were reaccredited with the Investors in People award and through a small working group we continue to work with staff to maintain the high standards through their involvement and development.

We strive to create a working environment which actively encourages open and honest communication, which is two-way and responsive to feedback, to ensure we listen, learn and take appropriate action. Our Quality Improvement Strategy (2019) also supports this with a commitment to:

- develop our staff, encouraging continuous learning and development
- create a supportive culture which nurtures staff to lead quality improvement internally within our systems and processes and externally through our work streams and projects.

Our approach to engagement and communication

In undertaking the various engagement and communication activities described in this strategy, we will apply the following principles:

- To be open and transparent in the conduct of our business.
- To ensure timely, accurate and relevant communications.
- To ensure consistent messages through the use of established corporate communication mechanisms.
- To widen access to our work by communicating in the appropriate language and format for the target audience.
- To encourage involvement, dialogue and feedback.
- To support staff in gaining the skills necessary to communicate well.
- To listen and respond to incoming communications with the aim of continuously improving.

In addition, we will take a number of factors into consideration when planning internal and external engagement and communication, including the target audience and their level of need and the range of method and type of communication required, ensuring this meets the intended purpose and takes account of the equality legislation and any identified impact on equality of opportunity.

External engagement and communication	Internal communication
Annual Conference	Appraisal / performance / development meetings
Business, Governance and Accountability meetings	E-mail / circulation of written information
Communiqués / Newsletters	Huddles
Corporate publications / information	Health and Social Wellbeing Committee / activities / events
Council meetings	Team development events
NIPEC PPI e-Forum	Notice Boards
“Engage” PPI resource for HSC	One-to-one meetings
SCAN (Senior Nurse/Midwife Current Awareness from NIPEC)	Skills update / awareness sessions
Social Media including Facebook / Twitter / Twitter chats / online surveys	Staff induction
Stakeholder Events	Staff Suggestion Box
Websites / microsites	Team and staff meetings
Professional networks / information / awareness events	Investors in People accreditation

Accessing our information

We are committed to making our information as accessible as possible and to promoting meaningful engagement with our stakeholders. We continue to strive to provide our information in a wide range of formats to meet the needs of our stakeholders.

Where reasonably practicable, our documents can be made available, on request, in an alternative format, Easy Read, Braille, audio formats (CD, mp3 or DAISY), large print or in a minority language to meet the needs of those for whom English is not their first language.

Equality and Human Rights Screening

This policy 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 <http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2166.htm>

Conclusion

Our engagement and communication strategy is aimed at supporting the work of NIPEC and achieving its strategic and business objectives. The strategy is a 'live' document and will guide our Council and staff in achieving the organisation's objectives in an open and transparent way.