



Annual Quality Report

2023/24



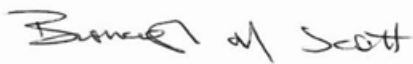
Foreword

Welcome to the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council's (NIPEC) 11th Annual Quality Report for the period April 2023 to March 2024. This report provides us with an opportunity to showcase some of the great work we do alongside our many stakeholders across the health and social care system. As you will see in the pages that follow, there are lots of positive things to highlight from the past year. We are incredibly proud of our achievements, but we know we have lots more work to do.

As an organisation we recognise that we continue to live in an era of unprecedented challenges but this can also create many opportunities. The climate crisis, global health challenges, and changes in social values are upending priorities across the system yet we continue to lead and inspire nurses and midwives to uphold excellence in their profession.

NIPEC's approach to quality is characterised by our appetite to continuously learn therefore we will be launching our own Quality Strategy during 2024 providing a framework in order to build knowledge and skills, standardise processes and encourage innovation to deliver the objectives of the organisation.

As chair and chief executive our commitment to you is that we will strive to constantly improve and develop our services with quality and improvement at the centre of all we do. I hope you enjoy reading more about the achievements of 2023/24



Bronagh Scott
NIPEC Chair



Linda Kelly
NIPEC Chief Executive





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AN INTRODUCTION TO NIPEC

The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing & Midwifery (NIPEC) was established through primary legislation as a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) in 2002. The work of NIPEC reflects the requirements set out by the regulatory body for nurses and midwives, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), which is articulated in *The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses and Midwives* (NMC, 2018)¹.

NIPEC plays a significant role in supporting the vision and objectives of the Department of Health's (DoH) Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) in the continued pursuit of excellence in the delivery of nursing and midwifery services to the population of Northern Ireland (NI). Our commitment to quality is reflecting how we deliver the five statutory responsibilities which include:

The promotion of:

- *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 provision of:

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

NIPEC staff comprise of a Chief Executive supported by a senior team of seven Senior Professional Officers, a Head of Corporate Services and a number of administrative support staff. Throughout 2023-24 NIPEC has continued investing in people, building a diverse team supporting the delivery of key business objectives. NIPEC is now recruited to 15 staff (14.8 WTE) with 1 vacant post. NIPEC's workforce model includes a range of associates who bring specific expertise to support ongoing programmes of work. NIPEC's Council is made up of a Chair and thirteen professional and lay members. NIPEC's corporate objectives align to our vision, mission and values.

¹ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2018). *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*. London: NMC. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/nmc-publications/nmc-code.pdf>



Theme 1:
Transforming the
Culture

A Quality culture lies at the heart of any successful organisation where staff are engaged and feel empowered to make change happen. They need to feel like they belong; that they are valuable, can be trusted to do their jobs competently, and that their opinions, feedback, suggestions and contributions matter. Building a quality culture is all about people skills where there's transparency, intercultural awareness, emotional intelligence and people bring their best self to work.

1.1 Our values and vision

NIPEC is a unique professional organisation guided by a set of shared values that directly impacts on what we do and how we do it. As a Health and Social Care (HSC) Arm's Length Body (ALB) organisation, NIPEC's values align with those underpinning the HSC strategy and delivery plans across Northern Ireland.



HSC Values

The values are set in a context of the requirement for all nurses and midwives to adhere to the NMC Code: *Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*. Our behaviours (organisational and individual) will continue to be underpinned by human rights principles, including dignity, respect and equality.

NIPEC is committed to the promotion of good relations between people of differing beliefs. As a health and social care organisation NIPEC is committed to promoting respect for diversity and to challenging sectarianism and racism in both employment and services.



NIPEC Team

Our Vision

Our vision, co-produced with stakeholders and the public, reflects the intention to work as an organisation that will continue:



Our Mission

NIPEC aims to continue the promotion of the highest standards of practice, education and professional development of nurses and midwives to facilitate the delivery of safe, effective, compassionate, person-centred care and services. NIPEC's four strategic functions and associated corporate objectives, align to our vision, mission and values.

NIPEC Strategic Functions



Practice



Education



Professional Development



Guidance, Advice and Information

Our Stakeholders

NIPEC works with many people in order to deliver our work. Some of our stakeholders will be more engaged directly in the work of NIPEC than others, therefore throughout this document, the word stakeholder includes our partners who are playing an active part in supporting NIPEC to undertake its business and who help to implement our work across the HSC system.

NPEC Stakeholders



1.2 Maintaining good governance


A number of internal working groups which support the delivery of good governance in NIPEC are:

- NIPEC Council;
- Audit and Risk Committee;
- Remuneration Committee;
- Professional & Business Committee; and
- The Senior Management Team.

NIPEC Council

NIPEC's Council is charged with setting the strategic direction of the organisation and overseeing governance responsibilities. Meeting quarterly, it monitors NIPEC's activities and performance. Feedback is provided by staff through written and verbal reports as well as presentations on the initiatives, projects and governance issues.

NIPEC's Council comprises a Chair, Chief Executive and thirteen non-executive members who are a combination of registrants and lay members. There were four



meetings of NIPEC Council in 2023-24 and all of these were held in person (although remote access was facilitated when requested). In addition, NIPEC Council held three workshops throughout the year.

Between 1 September 2023 and 31 March 2024, NIPEC's Chair, Bronagh Scott, took a scheduled leave of absence. Following advice, the Chief Nursing Officer confirmed the temporary appointment of Kieran McCormick, Deputy Chair of Council, to act as Interim Chair of NIPEC during this period.

With the increase in membership to thirteen non-executive members with effect from February 2023, expressions of interest to participate in Committees were requested from all Council members at the March 2023 Council meeting. Following discussions between the Chair and individual members, proposed membership of each of the three Council Committees was put forward at the June 2023 meeting and ratified at the September 2023 Council meeting, with all non-executives appointed to one of the Council Committees.

NIPEC Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee's purpose is to provide assurance to the Council that NIPEC has an effective system of integrated governance, risk management and internal control, across the whole of the organisation's activities that supports the achievement of the organisation's objectives. Membership comprises a minimum of four Council members, two professional and two lay, with the Chief Executive, Head of Corporate Services and representatives from NIPEC's External and Internal Auditors in attendance.


At the June 2023 Council meeting, Committee membership was reviewed in line with good practice. The new membership was confirmed at the September 2023 Council meeting.

During the Chair's leave of absence between September 2023 and March 2024, Mr McCormick assumed the role of Interim Chair of Council for the duration. At the September 2023 Council meeting, Mr McCormick proposed that Ms Caslin assume the role as interim Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee for this duration and members endorsed the decision.

The Audit & Risk Committee met four times during 2023-24.

NIPEC Remuneration Committee

The responsibility of the Remuneration Committee is to advise the Council about appropriate remuneration and terms of service for NIPEC's Chief Executive, who is currently the only member of NIPEC staff on a Senior Scale Executive Contract. The Committee comprises the Chair of the NIPEC Council who acts as Chair of the



Committee and at least two other non-executive Council members, to include Professional and Lay representation.

The Remuneration Committee met once in 2023-24 to sign off the Chief Executive's performance for 2022-23 and agree objectives for 2023-24.

Professional and Business Committee

During 2023-24, NIPEC's Chair established a third non-executive Council Committee, the Professional & Business Committee. The Committee was established to report in more detail to Council on the setting and measurement of corporate objectives, development of the annual business plan and the annual professional work programme and strategy. Terms of Reference for the Committee were approved by Council at its June 2023 meeting.

The Committee comprises a membership of five non-executives with the Chair being a lay member. None of the members are members of the Audit and Risk or Remuneration Committees. The Chief Executive, in her role as the Accounting Officer, attends the meetings either to form a view and understanding of the Committee's operation or to provide assurances and explanations to the Committee on specific matters.

The Committee held its inaugural meeting on 16 October 2023 when the business included the nomination of a Committee Chair and agreement on frequency of meetings in 2023-24.


Senior Management Team

For the operational management of the organisation and in support of the Chief Executive, NIPEC has a Senior Management Team (SMT), which is comprised of the Chief Executive, seven Senior Professional Officers and the Head of Corporate Services. The SMT meets on a 6-8 weekly basis as part of the organisation's Business Team meetings which are also attended by the Business Manager and Senior Communications Manager.

There are a number of other meetings to support organisational decision making including a Professional Team meeting, Health & Wellbeing Committee, Health & Fire Safety Committee, an Information Governance Group and a Website and Media Governance Group. The Chief Executive also meets regularly with members of the SMT to review progress on their individual objectives.

1.3 Equality and diversity

In September 2023, NIPEC Council approved our new Equality and Disability Action Plans 2023-28 for submission to the Equality Commission NI, in line with the organisation's equality and disability duties. This followed approval of the draft Plans



in March 2023 and a public consultation from 3 April to 30 June 2023 which was facilitated by the BSO Equality Unit. Several members of NIPEC's Council attended consultation events which were held jointly with other HSC regional organisations. Progress on the implementation of the actions will be submitted annually to the Equality Commission as part of the governance reporting cycle.

In addition to developing our new five-year Equality and Disability Action Plans, NIPEC submitted its Equality Annual Progress Report 2022-23 to the Equality Commission NI in August 2023.

In October 2023, NIPEC appointed five temporary Professional Officers to support one of NIPEC's business plan objectives and one of the actions contained within the Equality Action Plan 2023-2028. Their remit was to enhance access to post-registration education and career and leadership opportunities for overseas nursing, midwifery, allied health professionals (AHPs) and support staff working in HSC. Funding for these posts ended in March 2024, however NIPEC has submitted a business case for non-recurrent funding to enable the completion of the work in 2024-25.

Together with our stakeholders from BSO Equality Unit and regional organisations, we participated in two Disability Awareness Days in February and March 2024, on Stroke and Schizophrenia respectively. These days were facilitated by BSO as part of the annual Service Level Agreement (SLA) which was reviewed in 2023-24 as part of a wider consultation between BSO and client organisations. The Equality Services' SLA was selected as one of the areas to implement a new, more streamlined SLA template with a greater focus on assurances. This will be trialled in 2024-25. It was reviewed by BSO Equality Unit staff and NIPEC's corporate representatives in February 2024 and will be monitored through the 2024-25 year including at a formal mid-year SLA meeting.

1.4 Communication and engagement

During 2023/24 NIPEC continued to work towards improving engagement, through collaborating with key stakeholders, to consider the most appropriate ways to communicate and to evaluate our activity using a range of data and information.

Internal initiatives were also prioritised, as new members of staff were appointed to the NIPEC team and the Team settled into the new offices in James House.

Internal communication processes to facilitate team development and culture within the hybrid working environment, led to improvements in support for the achievement of learning objectives from our IIP action plan. The Senior Communications Officer started in October 2023 enabling NIPEC to have a dedicated communications resource. In the later part of 23/24 a range of new improvement initiatives were

introduced impacting on communications and engagement both internally and externally.

A proactive approach was introduced to planning communication and engagement activities with the development of an Annual Communications Planner to enable forward planning and messaging for priority projects, NIPEC events and regional key dates. Our main social media channel is X/Twitter and the team focused on scheduling and planning content creation for key events to maximise engagement, which has led to a 33% increase in social media engagement. Using the planner has also led to internal communication improvements, with the whole team approach to identifying key messages being part of the Monday Huddle. Processes are established to signpost relevant issues reported on social media in real-time to the team to enable better horizon scanning and planning.

Branding Guidelines for NIPEC were also developed to help maintain the quality, consistency and integrity of NIPEC's brand image and guide the use of NIPEC's branding in our visual communications.



Further development of NIPEC's professional and staff photo library was undertaken to support inclusion of regional images that are being used in NIPEC and partner organisations communications, recognising that stakeholders engage better with communication materials featuring relatable images

Improvements were also made to the accessibility of NIPEC's main website and the Nursing and Midwifery Careers website. Ongoing analysis of data continues to support the monitoring of web performance and inform future web development. A scoping exercise was also initiated to look at web best practice and will help to shape NIPEC's online presence, and provide a focus for improving accessibility, customer experience on the sites and evidence-based improvements.

Strategic communications advice and support was provided to regionally significant projects during 2023/24, aimed at improving NIPEC's regional profile and engagement with stakeholders including, the launch of Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) Report, Senior Nursing and Midwifery Communities of Practice, NICON conference, the new Ethnic Diversity Project along with the changes to Post Reg Standards Project.

NIPEC's programme of regional engagement also involved participation from Trusts, education providers, regulatory bodies, primary care and the independent sector throughout 23/24, in both virtual and face to face events. Stakeholder participation contributed to the coproduction of regionally significant work. This included Implementation of the changes to the NMC Post reg Standards, work to help

promote equal access to leadership and professional development opportunities, the non-medical prescribing rapid review, the development of a Collective Leadership Framework for Nurses Midwives, the perioperative nursing career pathway, cancer nursing career pathway and the senior nursing and midwifery community of practice.


NIPEC continued to develop relationships to encourage peer learning and sharing of communication and engagement improvement work and utilised our stakeholders communication channels to facilitate messaging on projects to staff at all levels across a variety of settings.

One of the biggest events during 2023/24 was the 'Back to the Future' conference celebrating NIPEC's 21st birthday. Over 120 delegates attended from organisations across health and social care, and were given an opportunity to hear of NIPEC's past achievements and future plans. Delegates expressed their pleasure in the high calibre of speakers and how inspiring and motivational the conference was with a particular mention to Equal Notes choir who entertained the audience before lunch.

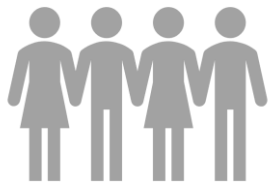


NIPEC 21st Birthday Conference 2023


To continue improving how NIPEC engages, event evaluation was ongoing and a new generic evaluation form was introduced to provide consistent and comparable insight to our event engagement. NIPEC continued to contribute a regional voice for



nurses and midwives and during the April 2023/24 period, NIPEC responded to five regional consultations on emerging strategies and policies.



Theme 2: Strengthening the Workforce



NIPEC strives to be a better and more inclusive employer by making full use of the talents of its staff. As an organisation we are working to build collective leadership allowing people to contribute fully based on their unique strengths and to develop new knowledge, skills and expertise. We want to bring joy and curiosity of learning into the workplace.

2.1 Valuing our staff

Office Accommodation

NIPEC formally took possession of their new accommodation in James House on 6 February 2023. The accommodation offers nineteen workstations and the open plan area is prioritised for use to encourage wider collaboration amongst the various components of the team. NIPEC has its own meeting room in the accommodation and this has been used extensively for internal meetings and a number of Council events. Larger, well-equipped meeting rooms are available to book in James House and NIPEC has used these to host a number of meetings and events with external stakeholders.

During 2023-24, NIPEC completed the transition back from full-time remote working to a hybrid working model with staff attending the offices for a minimum of two days per week. All staff come together on a Tuesday in the offices which provides a light and positive working environment for staff to work in and connect as a team.

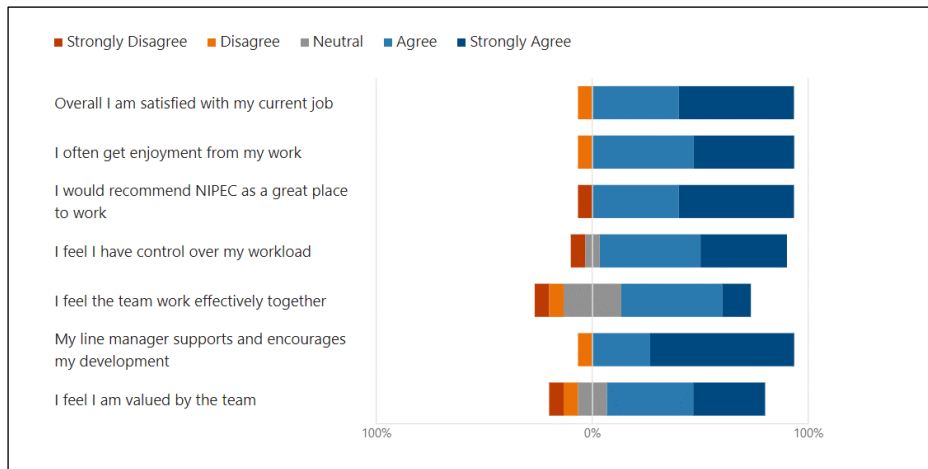
Health & Wellbeing

The Health and Wellbeing Committee meets quarterly and places a strong focus on empowering the team to explore and improve their health and wellbeing in an inclusive and holistic way, recognising that different people need different things at different times.

NIPEC staff have experienced significant changes over the past few years with a number of retirements, leavers, change in work environment and a new Chief Executive so during 23/24 we set out to understand how staff were feeling through a combination of surveys and 'What Matters' conversations. Adopting this approach led to some rich learning conversations and enabled staff to see that this was a different way of ensuring active listening.

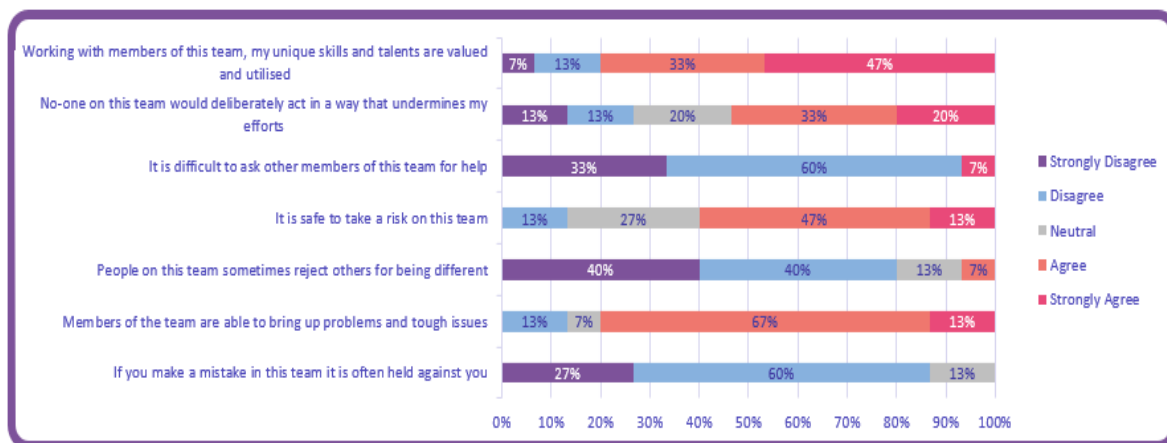
Initial responses from the staff survey carried out in November 2023 (Figure 1) indicated that staff were satisfied with their current job in NIPEC but more work was needed to help them feel valued and to work better together as a team.

Figure 1: Staff Survey Responses November 2023



Creating healthy cultures takes intention, time, and patience as we strive to set the tone for a more inclusive and equitable workplace. In order to achieve this the team at NIPEC recognise the need to create psychological safety, a specific, targeted concept critical for innovation and success. It is defined as the belief that no one will be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or beliefs. It allows staff to feel empowered to take risks and iterate, leading to better team performance². In November 2023, the team in NIPEC set out to gain a deeper understanding of their shared beliefs using a team psychological safety survey based on the work of Dr Amy Edmondson. A number of areas were identified for improvement as seen in the results displayed below in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Team Psychological Safety Survey November 2023



² Edmondson, A accessed at <https://hbswk.hbs.edu/item/four-steps-to-build-the-psychological-safety-that-high-performing-teams-need-today>

Too often conversations in the workplace focus on problems and issues within the system focusing on the negative, without a real understanding of how staff actually feel. By turning those conversations around to 'What Matters' this ensures we actively listen to what staff have to say ensuring their views are at the centre of decision making within the organisation. 'What Matters' is focused on an initial and continuing conversation with the team to identify any workplace frustrations, or 'pebbles in your shoes', and to engage and empower the team to identify potential solutions. The team in NIPEC engaged in conversations around 'What Matters' and a number of themes were identified:

- Clear expectations and timeframes
- Building Relationships
- Ensuring Flexibility
- Making Connections

The results from both surveys and the 'What Matters' conversations has led to Our Staff being one of the 3 top priorities within the new Quality Strategy alongside the development of an action plan with some focused quality improvement work driven by the Health and Wellbeing Committee.

One of the first improvements tested during 23/24 to encourage a healthy working culture, was the development of a Health and Wellbeing Newsletter providing a regular update to the NIPEC Team about upcoming events and programmes. This has generated very positive feedback and is seen as a great way of keeping staff updated.



2.2 Supporting education and learning

One of NIPEC's statutory functions is to promote high standards of education and learning for nurses and midwives. A small number of examples of this work over the 23/24 period are outlined below:

Maternity Support Workers

Maternity Support Workers (MSWs) are an integral part of the maternity care team providing safe and effective women centred care to women and their families, working under the direction and supervision of a registered midwife and within agreed guidelines and protocols.

In 2022, NIPEC led a review of the MSW education programme and sought agreement on the regional core skills and competencies to support the role of the MSW.

In addition, the regional MSW Standards were developed which were launched by the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) (Department of Health) in September 2024. These Standards provide clarity on the role and responsibilities of the MSW and offer assurances to the public that MSWs are working to an agreed standard.

In 2024, NIPEC explored different options and identified a new model to support the preparation and delivery of the MSW education programme that strengthens partnership working between the education providers and the HSC Trusts. This model aims to provide widening access opportunities for MSWs who would like to progress their career development.

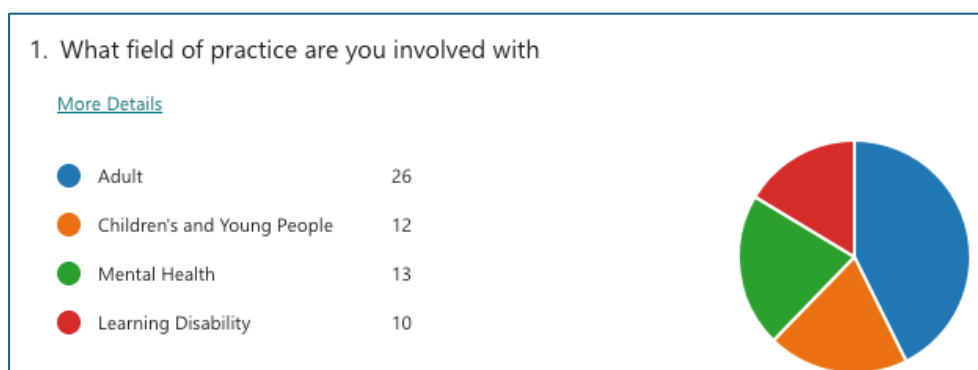
Review of Electronic NI Practice Assessment Document (ENIPAD)


The regional review of ENIPAD was led by NIPEC in partnership with the three Northern Ireland Universities. The purpose of the review was to modify certain aspects whilst ensuring it continued to meet the requirements of the NMC Future Nurse Future Midwife (FNFM) pre-registration Nursing programmes, BSc and MSc.

The review was undertaken in March 2024 through a regional stakeholder event which was well attended, with excellent representation across all fields of practice, from the five HSC Trusts and including students, lecturers, practice assessors and supervisors, NMC and people with a lived experience of care.

A questionnaire was used to capture responses from the delegates with a total of 61 participants completing it; the breakdown of fields of practice was as follows see Figure 3.

Figure 3: Fields of Practice





This equated to 43% adult, 21% mental health, 20% children and young people, and 16% learning disabilities. 52% were staff in practice, 26% academic staff and 21% students.

The review of the ENIPAD was very helpful in understanding what was working well for those using it and where there were particular issues that required solutions. From the feedback received the Task and Finish Group reviewed the themes and identified five recommendations which were then submitted to the NI Practice and Learning Collaborative and progressed as required.

2.3 Developing our workforce

Ethnic Diversity Workforces

NIPEC 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. NIPEC has completed three surveys since 2022 in order to monitor compliance against the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group in 2021. As a result of the recruitment of the five Trust 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 for the 2024 survey returns therefore enhancing their accuracy. For the first time the 2024 survey also included the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Trust.

In March 2024 NIPEC hosted its first Regional Ethnic Diversity Collaborative Workshop, with over 90 attendees from across the Trusts. This was an opportunity to share the survey results and seek feedback on the priorities for action which will be shared at the first meeting of the Project Board planned for May 2024.

The survey findings for the HSC Trusts show that there is still work to be done to achieve compliance with all the recommendations to support access to education for the global majority (ethnically diverse) nurses, midwives and AHP's and related support staff. However, all the Hospital and Community HSC Trusts now have evidence of the need for a top-up degree and commission it. The Universities are further along in achieving compliance with their recommendations. 1 of the Universities is compliant in all of the recommendations and only 2 of the elements require improvement, for all 3 Universities to be compliant with all the recommendations, see Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4: HSC Trusts' compliance

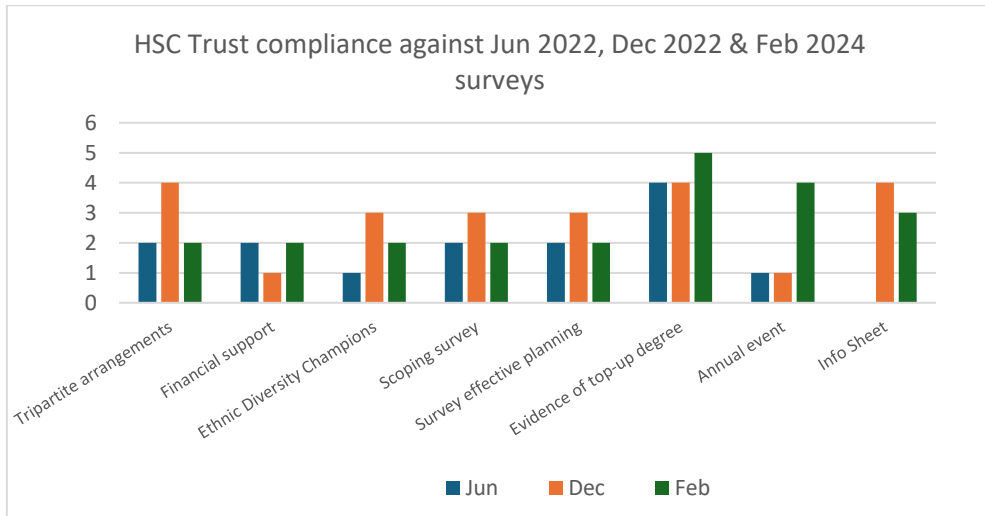
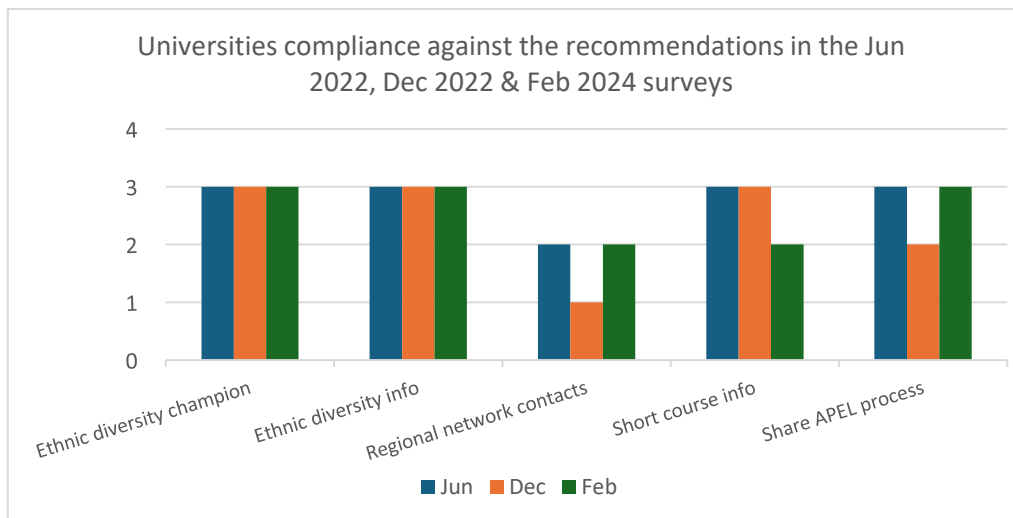


Figure 5: Universities' compliance



Feedback from the workshop in March 2024 was very positive and there was engaging social media activity pre and post conference. NIPEC has worked closely with stakeholders pre and post event sharing messages through Trust communication channels to maximise regional reach.

Career Pathways

Development of career pathways, in line with the Guidance Framework for Career Pathway development, has become an expanding component of NIPEC's work. During 2023/24 NIPEC continued to work in partnership with key stakeholders in the

development of career pathways to meet DoH strategic priorities for nursing and midwifery. The commissioned services will influence the roles adopted in each Trust, to ensure an effective nursing workforce to meet the demands of the specific service and population needs. The individual roles within the career pathways will enable HSC Trusts to identify the posts needed for their services through effective workforce planning.

Perioperative Nursing:

This Career Pathway is designed to help clarify and strengthen the range of important Perioperative Clinical Nursing and Support roles that support the delivery of high quality, safe effective, person and family centred care. The core competencies and defined education will guide the development of individuals to enhance their knowledge, skills and experience in the perioperative environment.

The career pathway comprises of eight core roles, which have been agreed by the Executive Directors of Nursing of the five HSC Trusts: Perioperative Nursing Assistant, Perioperative Senior Nursing Assistant, Perioperative Support Worker, Perioperative Staff Nurse, Perioperative Senior Staff Nurse, Perioperative Specialist Nurse, Perioperative Advanced Nurse and Perioperative Consultant Nurse.

Work is underway progressing job descriptions and once approved will be submitted for regional matching and evaluation. The career pathway will be submitted to CNO for endorsement before being published, implemented in HSC Trusts and shared on NIPEC's website.

Peri-op Career Pathway Writing and Steering Groups



Cancer Nursing:

Similarly, the Cancer Nursing Career Pathway has also progressed during 2023-24, through the development of a clinical career pathway for nurses working at all levels

in cancer care which meets the strategic vision and transformational leadership for nursing.

This clinical career pathway aspires nurses to work at all levels in cancer roles, building a skilled cancer care workforce which enables succession planning for specialist and advanced nursing roles. Subsequently enabling a high-quality service to people affected by cancer, support workforce transformation and staff well-being.

NIPEC has continued to work in partnership with key stakeholders and including the Role Development Writing Groups to develop the role descriptors, competencies, education requirements and cancer specific training needs for all of the agreed clinical roles: Senior Nursing Assistant, Cancer Support Worker, Staff Nurse, Senior Staff Nurse, Clinical Nurse Specialist, Oncology Nurse Practitioner/Haematology Nurse Practitioner, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Consultant Nurse and Children's Cancer.

The career pathway has been presented to Executive Directors of Nursing and the five HSC Trusts. Some further development has also been agreed and with ongoing work to progress job descriptions. Once these are approved, they will be submitted for regional matching and evaluation. The career pathway will be submitted to CNO for endorsement before being published, implemented in HSC Trusts and shared on NIPEC's website.

Cancer Career Pathway Role Development Writing Groups



2.4 Influencing policy and practice

Learning Disability Collaborative

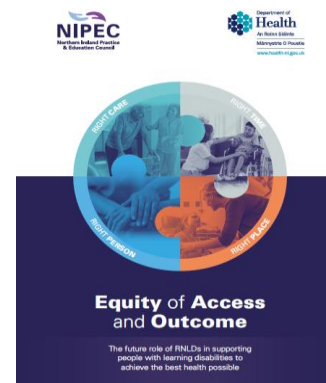
In 2022, the CNO commissioned NIPEC to establish a Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities (RNLD) Strategic Workforce Development Project Group to take forward the outworking's of the DoH Review of Learning Disabilities Nursing.

In December 2022 at the request of the Co-Chairs of the Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities – Strategic Workforce Development Project Group, the NI Collaborative which was aligned to the NI Action Plan Strengthening the Commitment was refreshed and rebranded and the RNLD Expert Reference Group (ERG) was established.

The RNLD ERG is chaired by Professor Owen Barr supported by a NIPEC Associate Senior Professional Office and membership includes individuals from a range of relevant organisations and sectors across the system. Since its inception the activity of the RNLD ERG has been driven by the requirements of the Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities – Strategic Workforce Development Project Group which has included the development of the proposed Model for RNLDs into the future and the completion of the report, *Equity of Access and Outcome: The future role of RNLDs in supporting people with learning disabilities to achieve the best health possible*.



Professor Owen Barr



The ERG met monthly during 2023, since the beginning of 2024 this reduced to bi-monthly with an average attendance of 14 members.

Activity of the RNLD ERG

The members of the RNLD ERG have contributed to the work of Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities – Strategic Workforce Development Project Group in a number of ways including:

- ❖ Scoping of the Learning Disabilities Nursing Workforce across the 5 HSC Trusts

- ❖ Gathering information and data on the programmes completed by RNLDs
- ❖ Providing feedback on various chapters and the Model for RNLD Nursing
- ❖ Engagement and Communication about the project through delivery of local engagement events
- ❖ Meeting with the RNLD Health Facilitators to discuss report (Jan 2024)
- ❖ Facilitated discussions on the *Issues and Challenges for RNLDs in using the NIPEC Delegation Framework in practice* (Feb 2023)
- ❖ Establishing and supporting the RNLD Communities of Practice (COP) (April 2023)

RNLD Communities of Practice

Historically aligned to the NI Collaborative and to address an action in the NI Action Plan a RNLD Professional Development (PDF) Forum was established and was jointly supported by NIPEC and the RCN. In April 2023 the PDF was refreshed and relaunched as part of the Registered Nurse Learning Disabilities – Strategic Workforce Development Project as a RNLD Communities of Practice (CoP). The CoP is open to all RNLDs and other nurses who have an interest in supporting people with learning disabilities - across all settings to include HSC Trusts, the education sector and the independent/voluntary sector be established.

The RNLD CoP is Co-chaired by two senior RNLDs, one from WHSCT who is also an ERG member and a Trainee RNLD Consultant Nurse and the other is a Trainee Advanced Nurse Practitioner from NHSCT.

The RNLD CoP is advertised via NIPEC social media platforms and across the system by the members of the RNLD ERG. It is extremely well attended with an average of 80 participants at each event. Participants are primarily RNLDs however medical staff, students and other professionals have attended. It provides a mechanism to share best practice in learning disability nursing, promote continuous professional development and offer a platform to explore registration specific and wider professional issues.



RNLD Communities of Practice meeting May 2023

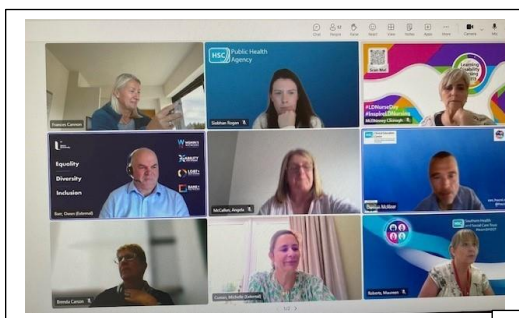
Going Forward

The NIPEC RNLD Strategic Workforce Development project is now concluded.

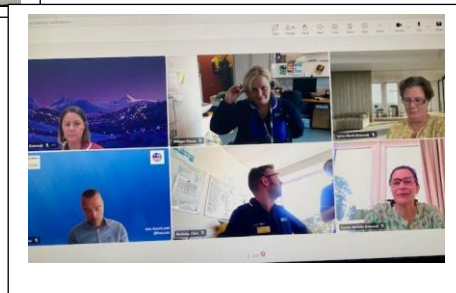
The report 'Equity of Access and Outcomes for people with a Learning Disability which proposes a model for the future of RNLD Nursing has now been endorsed by CNO and will be formally launched 1st November 2024 On Learning Disabilities Nurses day

It is anticipated there will be significant work and oversight for senior leaders across the system to realise the outcomes from the outworking's of the Equity of Access and Outcome report.

Given that the RNLD ERG and CoP are already established it is envisaged that these groups will continue to meet to help take forward and implement recommendations as agreed by the CNO.



RNLD ERG Members





Theme 3: Measuring the Improvement

Measuring organisational performance is an essential part of strategic decision-making. Understanding organisational performance helps leaders at every level to set targets, track their impact, and provide accountability to stakeholders. Performance measures or Key Priority Indicators (KPIs) traditionally evaluate efficiency and effectiveness of an organisation. No single source of data can help us understand how a system behaves, so we need several data sources to see how a system is performing. Quality measures therefore must also form an essential part of an organisations strategic portfolio as they are a critical part of knowing what the impact of the changes are. NIPEC's performance against corporate and business objectives is monitored by our Sponsor Branch, the Nursing Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals (NMAHP) Directorate. This monitoring continues throughout the year with more formal arrangements such as Ground Clearing and Accountability meetings with the Department. Effective management of our information creates intelligence that we as an organisation must use to become smarter and more productive.

3.1 Data and Measurement

Bringing Data Together

During 2023/24 the team in NIPEC began to look differently at how the success of the organisation is measured and through the work to develop our new Quality Strategy we are keen to integrate the current KPI's and Quality metrics together in a single dashboard. Quality metrics help to improve services through an approach that is consistent and accountable. By designing a measurement plan linked to the 3 key priorities within the Quality Strategy – Our Staff, Our Partners and Our Work, we will be able to outline the detailed 'translation' of our objectives into measurable metrics.



Figure 6: NIPEC Quality Strategy Priorities

By using multiple tools, sources and methods to collect and manage our data, this will enhance the credibility of the information we use and the decisions we make as an organisation.

Data Visualisation

In this increasingly data-driven world, it's more important than ever to have accessible ways to view and understand data. NIPEC's goal is to make data more available and understandable, data visualization in the form of dashboards creates the ability to analyse and share information in a different way. Data visualization is another form of visual art that grabs our interest and keeps our eyes on the message. Much information about a system and how to improve it can be obtained by plotting data over time, and then observing trends and other patterns. Tracking a few key measures over time is the single most powerful tool a team can use.

Early in 2023 NIPEC began to use run charts as a way of tracking a small number of measures, testing the concept with the team. Although still in the early stages of development we have taken the first steps towards the development of a Quality dashboard. Examples can be seen within the charts below.

Figure 7: NIPEC Website Visits

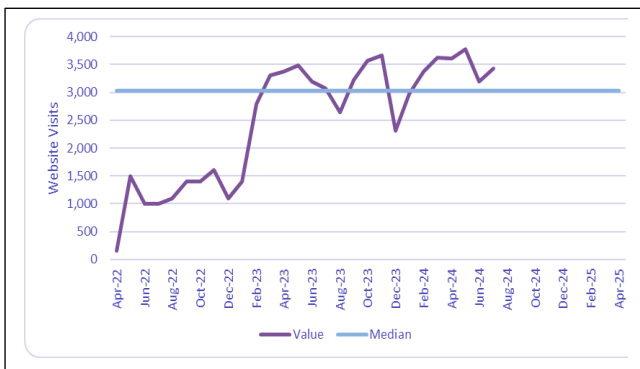


Figure 8: NIPEC Website Hits

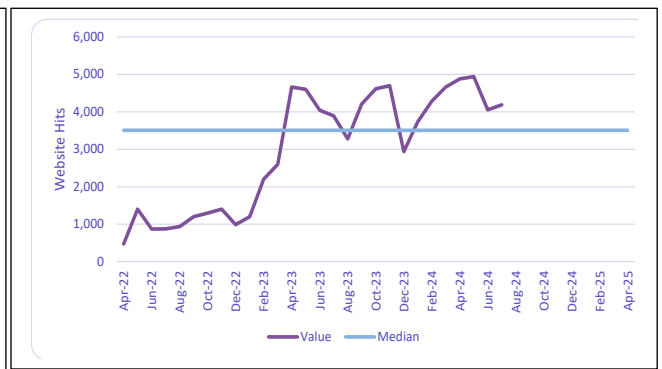


Figure 9: NIPEC Staff Sickness Absence

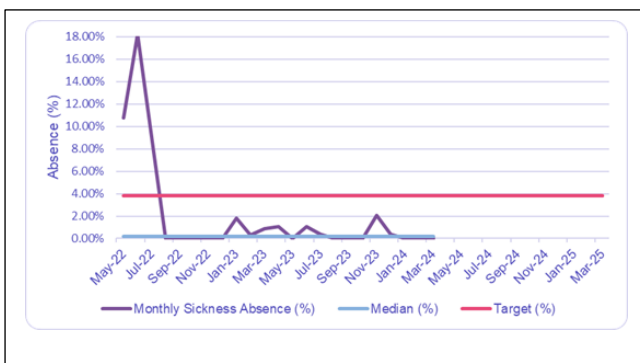


Figure 10: NIPEC Tweet Output on X



This work will be further developed during 2024 and linked to the metrics within our Corporate Plan, Business Plan and Quality Strategy.



Theme 4: Raising the Standard

A key function of NIPEC is to engage with stakeholders throughout the HSC in order to gain consensus and ensure that outputs are relevant, facilitate translation and implementation into practice, and hence raise standards and quality. NIPEC continues to enhance information systems and communication processes to meet the needs of its stakeholders in support of safe and effective practice by providing resources, advice and information for registrants and their employers, and in addition, exploring opportunities to increase its involvement in multidisciplinary projects and initiatives.

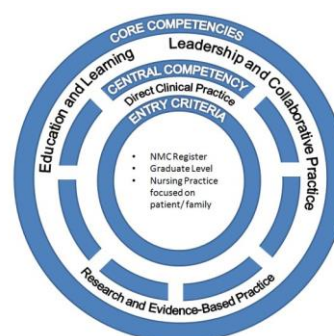
4.1 Supporting Best Practice

Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP): Analysis and Recommendations

NIPEC continues to support registered nurses and midwives who are increasingly extending and expanding their scope of practice beyond initial registration within all health and care settings and developing their skills, competence and confidence.

Furthermore, a substantial international body of evidence demonstrates the positive impact of nurses and midwives working at an advanced level of practice and the critical value they add across various health care settings.

For example, NIPEC previously led the development of an *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework*³ on behalf of CNO, with agreed entry criteria and core competencies for advanced nursing practice in NI to ensure regional consistency and common expectations about advanced practice.



Since then, retaining and transforming the workforce through advanced nursing practice continues to be a strategic priority for health and social care in NI. There are, however, areas of advanced practice that remain under developed in NI and more nurses are needed with advanced level practice skills to work across all settings.

To address this, CNO asked NIPEC to lead a further programme of work to inform the strategic direction and future needs of Advanced Nursing Practice in NI.

NIPEC completed this project during 2023 which included the following objectives:

³ DoH (2016) *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework: Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice in Health and Social Care Trusts*. Belfast: DoH.

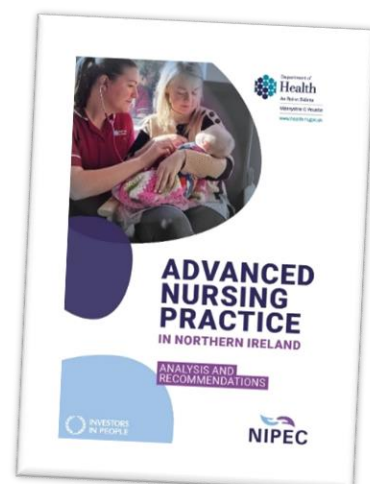
Project Objectives:

1. Review the existing education requirements and delivery model of the ANP Education Programme in NI;
2. Engage with the NMC to ensure alignment of future regulatory NMC requirements;
3. Scope ANP programmes across the UK and ROI to inform the project report;
4. 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;
5. Explore evaluation of existing ANP programmes in terms of educational priorities, processes and outcomes along with the potential for cost benefit analysis;
6. Consider how current arrangements link in with existing career frameworks;
7. Review the current ANP Framework to reflect the outcomes from the work above
8. Present a project report to CNO with findings and recommendations.

To progress this important programme of work, a Steering Group was convened by a NIPEC Senior Professional Officer, chaired by an HSC Trust Executive Director of Nursing. Representation included ANPs and trainee ANPs, senior nurses and midwives from HSC Trusts, DoH, Public Health Agency, Higher Education Institutes, Clinical Education Centre, Primary Care, Independent Sector, Royal Colleges of Nursing and Midwifery, NI Medical and Dental Training Agency, Regional Human Resources and Finance.

The findings demonstrate that in NI, ANPs already play a vital role across many areas within our HSC system including general practice, emergency departments, medical assessment units, out of hour's services, and within specialties such as paediatrics, orthopaedics and cancer care. Although more ANPs are needed to work across all settings, developing nurses to work at an advanced practice level requires significant investment for the employer and substantial commitment from the nurse.

To ensure that HSC organisations benefit from such an investment, and ANPs continue to deliver robust, up-to-date, evidence-based care, the project report *Advanced Nursing Practice: Analysis and Recommendations*⁴ was launched by CNO which presents 23 recommendations



⁴ DoH (2023) *Advanced Nursing Practice: Analysis and Recommendations*. Belfast: DoH.

aimed at building a critical mass of nurses working at advanced practice level across our HSC system.

Implementation of the recommendations is underway, including the establishment of Oversight Groups to streamline the ANP educational programmes and a NI Advanced Practice Academy to ensure full utilisation of this important nursing resource to optimise outcomes for patients and services and address population health needs now and into the future.



Launch of the Advanced Nursing Practice Report: L-R: Dr Carole McKenna, NIPEC Project Lead; Donna Keenan, Chair of Steering Group & Executive Director of Nursing WHSCT; Linda Kelly, NIPEC CE; Maria McIlgorm, CNO & Mary Frances McManus, Deputy CNO.


4.2 Improving standards

NIPEC's statutory functions, include the promotion of:

- high standards in education and training of nurses and midwives;
- professional development of nurses and midwives.⁵

Subsequently, NIPEC has a responsibility to contribute to the annual quality assurance monitoring of the non NMC post registration approved education, learning and development programmes for nurses and midwives. It has, therefore, been agreed with the DoH Northern Ireland that NIPEC will, on an annual basis, quality assure a requested sample of DoH funded development and education activities. A report is provided to the CNO and shared with the Education Commissioning Group.

⁵ Health and Personal Social Services (2002 Act) (Commencement) Order (Northern Ireland) 2002 refers, SR 2002 No 311 (C.25)



The Quality Assurance Framework (NIPEC, 2023)⁶ referred to as; the Framework, outlines the requirements that education provider organisations need to demonstrate, in order to provide assurances that their education programmes meet the required standards. It also provides the opportunity to recognise and share areas of good education practice and innovation, as well as, identify any areas of concern so that proactive advice in the form of actions and recommendations can be made.

The process has a strong focus on continuous improvement and enacting a quality assurance approach is undertaken in accordance with the Framework. that is both rigorous and proportionate.

These requested programmes are selected by the DoH based on a range of factors, including:


- Themes arising through Serious Adverse Incidents (SAIs)/ service user feedback;
- Patient Safety Alerts;
- Changing service demands;
- New models of nursing and midwifery care/ career pathways;
- Feedback from students/participants who have previously undertaken the education programmes;
- Feedback from the Education Commissioning Group (DoH).

In 2023, NIPEC updated the Framework taking into consideration recommendations from the education provider organisations, including: the Approved Education Institutions (AEIs), the HSC Clinical Education Centre (HSC CEC) and the Royal College of Nursing. The five key changes previously made to the Framework were incorporated into the 2022-23 QA monitoring cycle:

- The alignment of the Framework to the five themes within the NMC Standards Framework for Nursing and Midwifery Education⁷;
- Integration of a co-production approach where lay visitors are invited to participate in the quality assurance monitoring process;
- Timelines within the monitoring cycle were revised;
- Recommendations and actions from the monitoring review to be completed within a six-month time period (if applicable);


⁶ Quality Assurance Framework for Monitoring Nursing and Midwifery Education, Learning and Development Programmes Commissioned by the Department of Health. Available at: [Quality Assurance Framework \(2023\) for DoH Commissioned Education Activities | NIPEC \(hscni.net\)](#)

⁷ Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) (2018) Part 1: Standards framework for nursing and midwifery education. Available at: [education-framework.pdf \(nmc.org.uk\)](#)

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- Facilitating an annual Sharing and Learning Forum with the education providers to discuss, reflect and share the findings and optimise the key learning points.



Theme 5: Integrating the Care



Since its inception, NIPEC has developed a strong ethos of collaborative working with its key stakeholders across all areas of activity and has developed a reputation for facilitating successful regional projects and initiatives. In support of the delivery of high-quality care, NIPEC retains a focus on work developed through robust strategic alliances to translate regional direction and policy into practice and provide resources which strengthen the capacity and capability of the nursing and midwifery professions in NI. This involves effective, positive multi-professional partnership working and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders from various sectors. NIPEC continually explores opportunities for increasing its involvement in multidisciplinary projects and initiatives.

5.1 Working together

Communities of Practice (CoPs) are groups of people who share a passion for improving practice in health and care. Practitioners from different backgrounds, with different perspectives, come together across organisations and across hierarchies to meet as equals to create new knowledge and develop potential solutions to those “wicked problems” that go beyond what each of us can address in isolation.

It was envisaged that the strategic professional CoP would meet the ambitions of the regional Collective Leadership Strategy enabling a collective leadership culture to emerge. The vision was that the regional community of senior staff who learn from each other, share experiences, ideas and insights peer-to-peer, allowing inspiring practice to spread. It would provide a forum to focus on professional strategic issues, create new knowledge, define new territory, and develop a collective and strategic voice. Members are nurses and midwives from across the region who have an interest in the CoP and are AfC Band 8B and above.

Initial discussions focused around working together to build a CoP to meet the needs of strategic nursing and midwifery leaders and the professions. There have been thought-provoking discussions about leading nursing and the value proposition of nursing. Valuing nursing and midwifery as real professions and being visible and present at all strategic tables were two key priorities identified by members. CoP members in their roles have the ability to be opinion leaders and influencers; discussions are underway to progress a social media campaign promoting the value of the professions.

Figure 7 below demonstrates the journey of the strategic professional CoP during the 23/24 time period.




Figure 7: Strategic Professional CoP Roadmap 23/24

5.2 Shared Learning through HIAE

During 23/24 NIPEC continued to participate as a member of the Health Improvement Alliance Europe (HIAE). The HIAE is facilitated by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) and is a coalition of progressive leaders who are united for change, driven by collaboration, and focused on achieving health and health care results. Through an “all teach, all learn” network, the HIAE focuses strongly on improvement; members share and test innovations and improvements in new systems, and are eager to spread successful learning at a national scale. The group’s learning opportunities are driven by and for members, with a focus on innovations relevant to system challenges and improvement aims in Europe, and includes a dissemination strategy to share widely. A true learning and innovation community, the HIAE provides a wealth of opportunities to learn from others facing similar challenges across the continent and to share ideas and strategies across organisational, regional, and national boundaries.

In November 2023 a members meeting was convened in Leeds and was jointly hosted by Leeds and Yorkshire Partnership Foundation Trust and the NHS England Experience of Care Team. The theme over the 2 days was co-production and the attendees got the opportunity to hear and see fantastic examples of improvement and innovation from people with lived and learned experience. NIPEC supported 2 of its Senior Professional Officers to attend and on return they have worked in collaboration with Health & Social Care Quality Improvement (HSCQI) to bring some of the learning to the wider system through a virtual shared learning event planned for June 2024.



Over the past year the network has also maintained their focus on 2 priorities for the members; Staff Wellbeing and Creating Leading and Sustaining a Culture of Quality.

Staff Wellbeing

The focus of this HIAE workgroup has been on the development of 'What Matters' and extending the reach of this work to focus on What Matters to Staff (WMtS). Linked to the IHI Framework for Joy in Work⁸ the concept of asking staff what matters to them helps leaders understand what's meaningful to staff and the factors that contribute to burnout. Through actively engaging in this group and hearing the approach others have been using NIPEC have been testing this approach with initial conversations taking place in November 2023. Ensuring the questions were open and engaging and enabling staff to feel listened to has been a first step in further enhancing how we work together as a team.

Creating Leading and Sustaining a Culture of Quality

This HIAE leadership workgroup set out to explore what it means to create and sustain a culture of quality within an organisation. Through conversations about experiences and challenges, they focused on the impact of curiosity on our work. This group proceeded to draft, test and refine a set of simple rules that serve as guiding principles for leaders. Often when leaders face a complex problem, they go straight into solutions mode, but having the right questions and a curious approach is a much better way to aide understanding, demonstrate new behaviours and transform the way you lead. Through monthly calls, the group shared experiences of putting the rules into practice with some using the rules as part of their professional development.

Further information can be found in the blog <https://www.ihi.org/insights/5-simple-rules-curious-leaders>

⁸ [IHI Framework for Improving Joy in Work | Institute for Healthcare Improvement](https://www.ihi.org/insights/5-simple-rules-curious-leaders) accessed at www.ihi.org

CONCLUSION

We hope that this report is helpful and provides you with an overarching view of what NIPEC is doing to improve the quality of its services. Our quality improvement work is continually developing, focusing on areas we have identified in this report and much more. Our ambition remains; we are fully committed to delivering the necessary changes to enable the professions of Nursing and Midwifery to provide the highest standard of services to our patients and communities.

We look forward to sharing our Quality Strategy with you and further progress made during 2024-2025 in our next report.





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