

NMC

Regulate
Support
Influence

Strategy 2020–2025



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Message from Philip Graf, Chair of the Nursing and Midwifery Council

We regulate some of the UK's most trusted and valued professionals: nurses, midwives and nursing associates in England.

Many are caring for people in a variety of health and social care settings, and supporting women and their families in pregnancy and childbirth. Others are involved with health promotion, supporting us all in our physical and mental wellbeing. Some are teaching new entrants to their professions, leading service design and delivery, or advancing knowledge in their fields through research.

We are launching our new strategy in 2020, the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife. It has also turned out to be the year in which the world faces one of its greatest public health emergencies, as it battles with the impact of the coronavirus (Covid-19). This has far reaching consequences, not only for health and care but wider society and the global economy. Nursing and midwifery have never been more important to the wellbeing of people across the globe.

The NMC has the tremendous privilege and

responsibility of regulating nursing and midwifery in the UK. The way we regulate will be critical to us achieving our vision of "safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice, improving everyone's health and wellbeing".

Over the last year we have collaborated with thousands of people to create this strategy. I am very grateful to everyone who has been involved, challenged us and encouraged us to be ambitious. Together we have developed a vision of our future that will help guide us through the immediate challenges of the coronavirus and whatever new challenges may lie ahead over the next five years. But what really matters is how we translate that vision into action. As Nelson Mandela famously said: "Vision without action is just a dream, action without vision just passes the time, and vision with action can change the world."

Philip

Message from Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Executive and Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council

I joined the NMC in January 2019 and almost immediately initiated the process of developing our strategy 2020–2025.

In the last year I have criss-crossed the UK with my colleagues learning what people think the NMC does well, what we could do better and what more we could do. We have also researched the health and social care environment and looked to the future to identify looming challenges. Our

colleagues within the NMC have added their voice, highlighting how we could improve the organisation to be more effective.

We have turned all of this rich feedback into a strategy for the next five years and the rest of this document summarises the key points; explains how we got there; sets

out our strategic themes; and describes how we will ensure the organisation is fit for the future, even in the face of unprecedented new challenges such as the coronavirus (Covid 19).

Although we have now referenced the coronavirus pandemic in our strategy, it was not on the horizon as we developed our priorities. You may question whether this invalidates the strategy. My argument would be no, if anything, the coronavirus magnifies the need for the strategic ambition we set out here.

That said, we will not be able to do everything we have laid out in the timeframes we anticipated, and how we do things, particularly engaging with our colleagues and partners, will also need to change in the short term. We have already made decisions to pause or slow specific initiatives. When the immediate pressures have eased we will need to do a more in depth stock take of our work programme and agree new phasing which we will keep under constant review as the situation evolves.

However, as we move forward, it is clear we already have good foundations to build on, for example the new standards of proficiency, revalidation and changes in our registration process. People have also welcomed our new approach to fitness to practise, and they want to be sure we are applying the principles of a person-centred approach to dealing with concerns in a consistent way for registrants and members of the public.

We consistently heard people want us to do more – to use our insight and intelligence to influence the rapidly changing and challenging environment in which nurses, midwives and nursing associates work, helping to tackle workforce challenges, inequalities and safety risks.

I particularly want us to provide leadership and be a role model for the inclusive, positive working environments everyone needs to give of their best. We will stand against poor culture and discrimination in nursing and midwifery.

How we deliver our aspirations is also important and we have developed a new values and behaviours framework to underpin the strategy. We will be **fair, kind, collaborative** and **ambitious** in all that we do.

It's really important that our organisation is fit for the future too. Our NMC colleagues have helped us to understand the work we need to do internally to support our people to deliver the ambitions of the strategy. The way everyone has worked together in response to the impact of Covid-19 on the NMC to support nursing and midwifery professionals convinces me that we are capable of achieving those ambitions. We are also committed to doing all of this and maintaining our registration fee at the current level for as long as possible.

As you can see, there is much for us to do – but we know the hard work will be worth it.

I am so grateful to everyone within and outside the NMC who has contributed to this new strategic direction. I know that working collaboratively within the NMC and with those affected by what we do, we can support and sustain excellence in nursing and midwifery for the benefit of the public.

Andrea

01

Introduction – strategy at a glance



The NMC's purpose is to:

“Promote and uphold the highest professional standards in nursing and midwifery to protect the public and inspire confidence in the professions.”

Our strategy for 2020–2025 is based on the simplicity and clarity of three key roles that support our purpose: *regulate, support, and influence.*

We **regulate** in the public interest, giving people confidence in our professions. We believe that to do this well requires sustained and meaningful public engagement and empowerment.

Our regulatory role is enhanced when we **support** the public, our professions and our partners. Providing emotional and practical support to all those involved in our processes delivers better outcomes for all. Providing useful guidance, in collaboration with employers and educators, helps our professions uphold our high professional standards in practice. It helps rebalance our focus towards good practice from poor practice, preventing – not just responding to – harm.

Sharing intelligence from our work, and collaborating with partners to address mutual concerns, will enable us to positively **influence** the context for learning and care. By 2025 our partners should see us as a valued and expert voice, benefiting from the unique insight we are able to bring.

Together this will help us deliver our vision of:

“Safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice, improving everyone’s health and wellbeing”



Our values underpin everything we do. They shape how we think and act.

We are fair

We treat everyone fairly. Fairness is at the heart of our role as a trusted, transparent regulator and employer.

We are kind

We act with kindness and in a way that values people, their insights, situations and experiences.

We are collaborative

We value our relationships (both within and outside of the NMC) and recognise that we’re at our best when we work well with others.

We are ambitious

We take pride in our work. We’re open to new ways of working and always aim to do our best for the professionals on our register, the public we serve and each other.

NMC Strategy on a page

Purpose

Promote and uphold high professional standards in nursing and midwifery – protecting the public, inspiring public confidence.

Vision

Safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery, improving everyone's health and wellbeing.

Our role

2020–25

Regulate

- An accurate and transparent **register**
- Robust professional and educational **standards**
- Assuring **education programmes**
- Responding fairly to **fitness to practise (FtP) concerns**

Support

- Promote **understanding** - our professions and our role
- Provide **practical tools** - help embed standards
- **Emotional/practical support** - people involved in our processes

Influence

- Promote positive and inclusive **professional working environments**
- Share **data and insight** to identify risks of harm and address workforce challenges
- Encourage **regulatory innovation**

Themes

2020–25

Improvement and innovation | Proactive support | Visible and better informed | Engaging and empowering | Insight and influence

Values

Fair Kind Collaborative Ambitious



02

Who we are
and what we do



Who we are and what we do

We are the professional regulator for nurses and midwives in the UK, and nursing associates in England. Our objectives are set out in the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (as amended):

The over-arching objective of the Council in exercising its functions is the protection of the public.

The pursuit by the Council of its over-arching objective involves the pursuit of the following objectives –

- (a) to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of the public;
- (b) to promote and maintain public confidence in the professions regulated under this Order; and
- (c) to promote and maintain proper professional standards and conduct for members of those professions.

Our regulatory responsibilities include:

1. We maintain the register of nurses and midwives who meet the requirements for registration in the UK, and nursing associates who meet the requirements for registration in England.
2. We set the requirements of the professional education that supports people to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for entry to, or annotation on, our register.
3. We shape the practice of the professionals on our register by developing and promoting standards including our Code, and we promote lifelong learning through revalidation.
4. Where serious concerns are raised about a nurse, midwife or nursing associate's fitness to practise, we can investigate and, if needed, take action.

Our governing body is our Council, which is made up of lay people and others drawn from the professions we regulate. Our work is overseen by the Professional Standards Authority for health and social care, which reviews the work of regulators of health and care professions. We are also accountable to Parliament.

NMC in numbers

More than:

660,000
Nurses

37,000
Midwives

24,000
professionals

36,000
professionals

7,000
Dual registrants

1,500
Nursing Associates

On our register

A total of more than 700,000



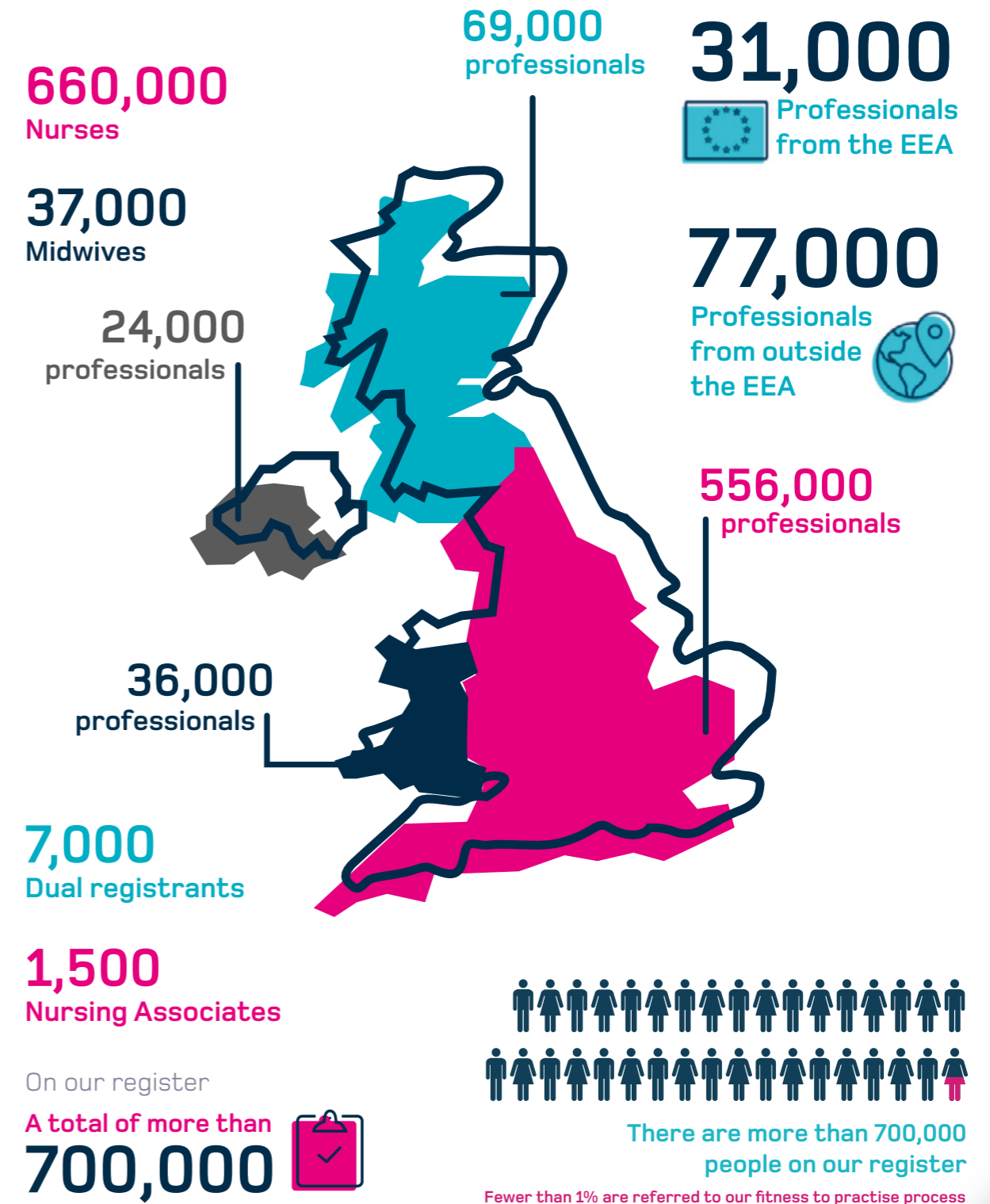
69,000
professionals

20,000
Professionals joining our register annually

31,000
Professionals from the EEA

77,000
Professionals from outside the EEA

556,000
professionals



There are more than 700,000 people on our register
Fewer than 1% are referred to our fitness to practise process

03

Strategic context



The strategic context we face is challenging.

Changing context of care

The changing needs of people using health and care services, including ageing and multi-morbidity, alongside medical and technological advances, require new ways of ways of working in new settings. Across the four countries of the UK, genomics and digital technologies are becoming an integral part of clinical practice. There is more multi-disciplinary teamwork within and across health, care and other sectors¹. Practitioners are increasingly working across traditional professional boundaries.

This has significant implications for how we regulate. There is a risk that the regulatory process could stifle innovation, but failure to act could result in a risk to safety. There is a growing need to work collaboratively with other regulators.

Health inequalities

Here are systematic and avoidable differences in health outcomes between different groups of people.² People with disabilities, from lower socioeconomic groups, black and minority ethnic groups, and those living in the most deprived areas of the UK, have poorer health outcomes. Men and women living in the most deprived areas have seen their healthy life expectancy decline.³ Some groups also find it harder to access care, and receive poorer care.⁴⁻⁶ Our professions need to help address these inequalities, and as their regulator our professional standards need to support this.

“Supporting a profession under pressure and delivering good and safe patient care cannot be done in isolation. We would be keen to work with the NMC on [these] issues... a particularly important endeavour as practice moves towards a model of team care”

General Medical Council



Workplace culture

We value the diversity of the nurses, midwives and nursing associates on our register as an asset for the health and care sector. Compared to the UK population, our professions have more people from an ethnic minority background and more who identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual.

Data from the NHS in England demonstrates that ethnic minority staff are underrepresented in senior roles, more likely to go through the formal disciplinary process, and more likely to experience harassment, bullying or abuse both from members of the public and colleagues.⁷ They are also less likely than their peers to believe their employer provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion and are less likely, once shortlisted, to be appointed.⁸

At the same time, we know that black and ethnic minority registrants are more likely to be referred to us for matters that do not, after investigation, require a regulatory sanction. As well as ensuring that the referrals we receive are appropriate and not discriminatory, we are concerned about the links between unacceptable behaviours, poor culture and patient safety.⁹

Learning from major failures in care

It is imperative that we learn the lessons from major failings in care, to help reduce the risk of future harm. Poor responses from providers and regulators also compounds the distress of those who have suffered.¹⁰ More sophisticated mechanisms of intelligence gathering and analysis provide opportunities for regulators, working collaboratively, to move from a reactive to a more proactive and preventative approach.

“Official inquiries ... have pointed to a failure to hear the patient voice.... So “better use of intelligence” must apply to patient feedback as much as to clinical evidence”

Patient Experience Library – the national evidence base for patient experience and involvement



Workforce pressures and shortages

Workforce pressures in nursing and midwifery are a major concern. Shortages threaten the quality of care and the learning environment, as well as the wellbeing of staff. Nurses and midwives are at growing risk of work related stress and burnout.¹¹ Each of the four UK countries has work in progress to address its specific challenges, but as we highlight in the following section, there is a widespread desire for the NMC to use its insight and influence to support these endeavours.

Climate emergency and sustainability

Climate change has an impact on human health from infancy to old age, with effects including undernutrition, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, and deaths from extreme weather conditions such as wildfires and heatwaves.¹² Health and care services also have a significant environmental impact.

The NHS alone is responsible for over a third of all public sector emissions.¹³ Nearly a fifth of those emissions are linked to patient and staff travel.¹⁴ Services will need to change and adapt to enable the UK to meet its climate change targets. We need to pay close attention to the environmental impact of our own regulatory work.

“Gaining insight into systemic inequalities must also include inequalities in development opportunities for staff from BAME backgrounds”

Professional, England



Political changes

There have been significant changes in the political landscape in the UK, with a new government since December 2019 and our exit from the European Union on 31 January 2020. Brexit and continuing workforce pressures are likely to place new demands on our registration processes.

Much of health and care professional regulation is the responsibility of the UK government, while health and care policy and funding are devolved to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. We need strong links across the four countries of the UK and an appreciation of the diverse political, service delivery and workforce planning contexts.

Regulatory reform

We welcome the government's signalled move toward a more responsive and accountable form of regulation.¹⁵ We are committed to working with the government and other stakeholders to help modernise the legislative framework for professional regulation in health and social care.

New disease threats

The new coronavirus (COVID-19) demonstrates the vulnerability of health systems when faced with a disease for which there is no immediate available treatment. The growth in antibiotic resistant microorganisms is also a growing concern. Regulators have a particular responsibility in the context of health emergencies. We need to work with our partners across health and care to protect public safety, guided by expert public health advice, while having regard to the health and wellbeing of our professions.

“Help address the current workforce crisis – this has a direct impact on care provided and errors made”

Professional, England



04

Strategy consultation – who we spoke to and what we heard



At the beginning of 2019 we embarked on an ambitious programme of engagement and consultation

We heard from over 10,000 people across many different forums:

- **Independent research** involving online surveys and focus groups with the public, registrants, NMC colleagues and seldom heard groups.
- A **perceptions audit** with key stakeholders across the four countries of the UK.
- Two online surveys asking what we should focus on in our strategy. **More information about what we heard is on our website.**
- A series of regional engagement events and meetings with decision and policy makers across the four countries of the UK.

Shaping the future **NMC**
2020  25

Who we spoke to and what we heard

From the public

- Use your influence to highlight where workplace factors are compromising good care and take action where there have been failings.
- Raise your profile to increase our confidence in nursing and midwifery and ensure that we know what we can do if we experience poor care.
- Deliver your core regulatory work in ways that support your professions to engage positively in learning, improvement, and safety.
- Be more inclusive and accessible in who you hear from and engage with – beyond those with the loudest voices.

From nurses, midwives and nursing associates

- Help us to provide the care we all want by raising awareness of factors that compromise good care.
- Build public understanding and appreciation of our work and that of our professions.
- Keep improving your services to resolve concerns quickly and ensure that all those involved – professionals and the public – have access to effective support.
- Be more visible and do more to connect with us outside London and at a wider range of the settings in which we work in.

“Build public understanding and appreciation of our work and that of our professions”

Professional, England



From our partners including educators and other professional regulators

- Continue to strengthen your relationships with us, making use of our relevant expertise, so that we can better achieve common goals.
- Maximise the quality and value of your core regulatory processes, including revalidation and the quality assurance of education.
- Improve and share your data, and use what we know to supplement your own insights.

From NMC colleagues

- Ensure we have the right skills, organisational structure, resources and processes in place to deliver our strategy.
- Make better use of the data and insights we have so that we develop a leading voice in the sector and help improve nursing and midwifery practice.
- Make sure people of all backgrounds have equal opportunities to develop and progress within our organisation.
- Promote a rounded view of our wide-ranging work, shifting the focus beyond fitness to practise.
- Prioritise rigorously, ensuring that all change is managed and embedded effectively.

Keep improving in your core regulatory work

Our top priority is to deliver our core regulatory work well. There were positive reflections on revalidation, on the publication of our registration data, and on the person-centred direction we are taking with fitness to practise.

There was some negative feedback about people’s experience of being involved in hearings and making enquiries and complaints. Many felt that revalidation should be more rigorous, quality assurance of education more consistent, and training placements offered in a wider variety of settings including social care. Educators and employers encouraged us to see them as a source of expertise that can help us to understand current issues and identify future areas of focus.

Responses to our consultation revealed a lot of misunderstandings and confusion among members of the public and some of the people on our register about what we do. It is important that people know what they can expect from their care, what the NMC can and cannot do, and how to raise concerns if they need to. Promote a better understanding of the nurses, midwives and nursing associates do.

“Being transparent, responsive and accountable to the public, who the NMC need to assure that registrants are fit to practise”

Professional, England



Promote a better understanding of the work nurses, midwives and nursing associates do

There is no such thing as a typical nurse, midwife or nursing associate. Our registrants are diverse and they take different routes into our professions. This diversity should be reflected more in our ways of working, communications, imagery, policies and standards. At the same time, we need to promote a better understanding of what the people on our register do. This includes the differences between roles as well as the level of professionalism and specialist training they have.

“The public need to be more aware that registrants are regulated by a professional body. Many perceive us as ‘only nurses’ and have no idea of our training requirements and CPD needed to remain as practitioners”

Professional, Wales



Support nurses, midwives and nursing associates to deliver good care

Nurses, midwives and nursing associates want us to do more to support them to practise well, particularly when they are raising safety concerns or involved in fitness to

practise proceedings. The public also feel our professionals should be well supported in their demanding work. Our reputation as a “policeman” looms large among people on our register, even though it affects less than one percent of registrants each year.

“I emphasise/echo what the public said, ‘Don’t just police standards of care, help improve them”

Professional, England



Be more visible and involve a wider range of people in your work

Many people perceive us as England- or London-centric and they want us to ensure that individuals and organisations from across the whole of the health and social care landscape are involved in our work. This includes those working in the NHS, and in the independent and voluntary sectors. They want us to be inclusive in all of our work and not just rely on the same people or the same routes (e.g. speaking only to those at senior levels or through online engagement).

We need to listen to diverse groups – people identifying with different protected characteristics as well as organisations representing them – and those who traditionally may not be engaged in our work.

“Ensure that engagement is inclusive and engages with those that reflect the mix of the population”

Professional, England



Those from devolved countries were keen to point out system and policy differences, but were also at pains to emphasise the need for regulatory consistency across the UK and its regions.

There was a widespread desire for us to build a closer relationship with the students who will be our future registrants. This will give us insights into students’ experiences of their education and their early career needs. This insight can help protect against people leaving the profession prematurely. It could also help to build a more positive view of regulation and the support it could give them.

“Move [perceptions of what you do] away from the fear of being ‘struck off’. I know you care, but others are fearful! Enlighten and encourage staff and students!”

Student nurse, England



05

Our strategic themes

Our five strategic themes will guide how we prioritise and phase our work, as well as new investment in people and other resources.

01 Improvement and innovation

02 Proactive support for our professions

03 More visible and informed

04 Engaging and empowering the public, professionals and partners

05 Insight and influence



01 Improvement and innovation

To improve and innovate across all our regulatory functions, providing better customer service, and maximising the public benefit from what we do.

Why this is important

Our statutory regulatory responsibilities are unique to us, and are the bedrock of all that we do. Doing them well was a top priority for those we engaged with.

What we are building on

- We have simplified and automated many of our registration processes, making it much more straightforward for those who meet our standards to join and re-join our register.
- We have streamlined our requirements for overseas applicants to join our register, improved our supporting information and made our process faster and more efficient.
- We are leading innovation in the management of fitness to practise concerns, encouraging early resolution of suitable cases and pursuing an approach that drives insight and remediation wherever possible.

Where we expect to be by 2025

- We will have easily accessible processes, support and advice available for those interacting with us.
- The movement of suitably qualified overseas applicants into the UK nursing and midwifery workforce will be more straightforward, while still ensuring safe and effective practice.
- Learning about the impact of contextual factors will be identified and shared.
- The value of our register to the public, registrants and employers will be enhanced, with more accessible, accurate and useful information.

Our new plans

We will:

- Support high quality new routes to registration for people who can meet our standards to facilitate access to the register.
- Continue to improve the support we provide to our overseas applicants and those supporting them, developing our test of competence model in line with our new standards of proficiency.
- Systematically investigate the impact of contextual factors in fitness to practise cases, while retaining a focus on individual professional accountability. This will help us achieve fairer outcomes.
- Improve our approach to fitness to practise investigations, to improve the experience and support for those involved, whether professionals or the public.



02 Proactive support

Enabling our professions to uphold our standards today and tomorrow, anticipating and shaping future nursing and midwifery practice.

Why this is important

- Our standards need to reflect and respond to the rapidly changing and challenging environment in which our registrants are working.
- People have more complex clinical needs that are increasingly being shaped by who they are and where they live. Our registrants need to be equipped to better meet those needs.
- Complex care pathways and transfers between services require greater levels of clinical decision-making by teams of workers with a mix of skills.

What we are building on

- A refreshed Code – setting out the standards that people can expect from the professionals on our register.
- Our new nursing and midwifery standards are much more ambitious and future focused than previous standards, setting the bar higher and developing more flexible professionals able to practise in an increasingly complex context.
- Four years of successful revalidation, the process that supports professionals to reflect on their practice and how the code applies to their day-to-day work.
- In welcoming nursing associates on to our register, we have worked closely with employers and educators to provide a supportive environment for their professionalism.

Where we expect to be by 2025

- Our regulatory standards, education and process of revalidation support our professionals to better meet and adapt to the changing needs of people using health and social care services.
- Our professionals can access resources and guidance that are useful throughout their career, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address new challenges, for example from new and emerging technologies.

Our new plans

- A new and more dynamic approach to developing professional standards, in order to respond rapidly to new professional challenges, including reviewing the Code.
- A new set of ambitious post-registration standards of proficiency for community and public health nurses, and a comprehensive review of advanced nurse practice including consideration of whether regulation is needed.
- Publication of a set of shared principles to support better preceptorship for newly-qualified nurses and midwives.
- Strengthening our approach to revalidation, drawing on the evidence from our evaluation.



03 A more visible and informed regulator

In closer contact with our professions, their employers and their educators so we can regulate with a deeper understanding of the learning and care environment in each country of the UK.

Why this is important

- We recognise that to make good, informed decisions, we need to better understand the breadth and diversity of practice – three professions, multiple roles, four countries, and the many settings in which this takes place. Some registrants view us as ‘remote’ and ‘inaccessible’. They feel that we talk at too high a level about our professions and do not always reflect their experiences of practice.

What we are building on

- We have developed our employer link service, which ensures regular contact between health and care providers and the NMC, particularly but not exclusively over the investigation and resolution of concerns.
- There has been positive feedback about the extent and quality of our involvement of different groups in our big programmes of work. People want to see our best practice applied consistently and widely.
- We have identified a lead director for each of the four UK countries with a view to strengthening relationships, visibility and partnership working.

Where we expect to be by 2025

- A valued and constructive contributor to local/regional/national health and care policy and practice development.
- We will be able to evaluate the impact of our regulatory work on different groups of registrants, supported by a greater understanding of the range of environments in which they work.
- Those using our services will receive more timely responses, sensitive to their individual needs.

Our new plans

- We will review and develop our presence in local areas across the English regions and in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, maintaining a focus on providers and further extending our place-based networks.
- We will develop closer relationships with our future registrants – students in the UK and prospective overseas applicants.
- We will strengthen our focus on customer service, make better use of automation, and use comprehensive measurement of customer satisfaction to drive improvement.



04 Engaging and empowering

Actively engaging with and empowering the public, our professions and partners. An NMC that is trusted and responsive, actively building an understanding of what we and our professionals do for people.

Why this is important

- People told us they want to be involved in our work more regularly and from an earlier stage. They don't want collaboration or engagement for its own sake – we need to empower people to take part meaningfully by ensuring they understand what we do and how they can shape and influence outcomes.
- We must hear from diverse groups – people and organisations working in a range of different roles and settings, as well as those identifying with different protected characteristics. We should strive to hear from those who traditionally may not have been engaged in our work, and collaborate with other organisations where we can to reach these people themselves.

What we are building on

- Learning from successful experiences of sustained engagement and co-production – for example, in the development of new standards of proficiency.
- Regular meetings of a range of standing advisory groups to shape our work.
- Senior leadership in our organisation with specific responsibility for public support and engagement.

Where we expect to be by 2025

- Stronger and more meaningful relationships with our partners across all four countries.
- We have articulated clearly what a person-centred approach means, in a way that the public, our professions, our colleagues and others can use to hold us to account.
- The public, our professions and our partners experience co-production as our habitual approach to the development of standards and policy.
- Better public understanding of our professions and of our role.

Our new plans

- A more systematic and targeted approach to stakeholder engagement across the four countries.
- Agree and embed a person-centred approach in all our regulatory activity, testing our progress through a public engagement programme.
- Deliver a public information campaign to help people understand what we and our professionals do.



05 Insight and influence

Learning from data and research to improve what we do and working collaboratively to share insights responsibly to help improve the wider health and care system.

Why this is important

- The insights from our work, together with research and evidence from other sources, will help us to improve how we regulate, and highlight issues that are affecting professionals' ability to practise safely and effectively.
- It is important to our partners that we are not only committed to joint working, but also skilled and equipped to play a positive role and add value in collaborative activity.

What we are building on

- Our Regulatory Intelligence Unit, which assesses and analyses data from internal and external sources, to improve insight from fitness to practise cases and highlight risks that may require regulatory action.
- Closer collaboration with other regulators and stakeholders to identify situations that could pose an ongoing risk to the public or professionals, for example through the establishment in England of the Emerging Concerns Protocol.
- Our work with other regulators to develop common ways of collecting and analysing data, for example capturing insight on issues around equality diversity and inclusion.
- The intense collaborative effort to successfully and quickly establish a Covid-19 emergency temporary register with agreement from the four countries, Council of Deans, Royal Colleges and unions.

Where we expect to be by 2025

- Accessible, accurate, useful and more relevant information on our register.
- Our partners see us as a leading voice and benefit from the useful insights and ideas we bring to the table on issues such as career profiles and contextual risk factors.
- We will have a track record of speaking up for a healthy, inclusive and positive working environment for our professions.

Our new plans

- Publish data and statistics in innovative ways that add value to the wider health and care system, including workforce planning.
- Publish an annual 'State of Nursing and Midwifery Education and Practice' report to provide insight to the context in which our professions work and train.
- Work closely with the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and others to shape improvements to our legislative framework.
- Evaluate the impact of our work on people with different protected characteristics and work with others to address inequalities.



Fit for the future organisation

Our strategic aims have significant implications for how we operate as an organisation. We will align our culture, capabilities and infrastructure, to our new strategic aims.

Our new values and behaviours

Our values and behaviours will influence the work we do and how we do it. They will also have a positive impact on the working lives of NMC colleagues. We will embed our new values and behaviours in our recruitment and people management processes.



“We want our colleagues to be proud to work for the NMC. We will ensure that all colleagues have equal opportunities to develop their skills and careers”



Enhanced capabilities

Strategy and analysis

Improved analytical capabilities will be critical for the successful delivery of our strategy. We will routinely collate and evaluate material about the future of health and care delivery, regulation and professional education, to inform decisions by our Council and the NMC team.

We need to improve the quality and usability of our data including the capacity for our partners to analyse our data themselves.

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Professional practice

We have NMC registrants as colleagues, as advisers and playing key role in our regulatory work – as panellists, and education reviewers, for example. Being seen to draw on sound expertise from our professions will improve how we regulate and enhance our professions’ confidence in our work. We will look afresh at how we access and use expertise from the professions we regulate at the NMC.

Support for learning and continuous improvement

We need to improve the internal and external customer experience. We will develop the capability of all our colleagues to continuously learn and improve how they work.

People

We want our colleagues to be proud to work for the NMC. We will ensure that all colleagues have equal opportunities to develop their skills and careers. We will use authoritative external benchmarks (such as the Workplace Race Equality Standard, and Stonewall) to track our progress as an employer.

Our new infrastructure

New organisational design and governance

We need to ensure that we work in ways that support our strategic ambitions. We have a new structure designed to enhance our regulatory and wider impact. It will be supported by the appropriate governance structure, to improve the quality and timeliness of decision-making, and ensuring corporate oversight of delivery.

Accommodation

We currently work from three sites in London and one in Edinburgh; we also hold hearings in Cardiff and Belfast. Over the next five years we will develop and implement accommodation plans that will support our strategy, providing modern environments to support new ways of working, learning lessons from the success of home working during the coronavirus lockdown and facilitating engagement with partners.

Technology

We will continue to improve our technology, so that our colleagues have the tools they need to work efficiently. We will modernise the systems that support our regulatory work, to enable us to provide good customer service, and allow us to store and use our data to provide insight.

Corporate social responsibility

We are committed to acting responsibly and operating sustainably in all our activities:

- We conduct ourselves ethically and in line with our values. Our policies outline our commitment to ethical working practices and human rights, such as the Modern Slavery policy¹⁶ and the ethical investment policy.¹⁷
- We champion the values of equality, diversity and inclusion. We value the diversity of the people on our register, those they care for and our NMC staff. We believe that equality of opportunity is essential for people to do their jobs well.
- We are mindful of the mental and physical wellbeing of the people who use our services, our professions we regulate, and our colleagues.
- We recognise the serious impact of the climate and ecological crisis, and its effects on public health in the UK and worldwide. We are committed to acting sustainably, and supporting those working in the health and care sector to do so, particularly in reducing carbon emissions. We recognise that taking meaningful action to protect the environment, and mitigate climate change, will also benefit people's health and wellbeing.

We will develop a sustainability plan with clear objectives, which will incorporate how we work as a regulator. This will cover activities such as investment, procurement, travel, energy and waste. Our plan will be available on our website and we will update people on our progress through our annual report.

Building a five-year plan

We are clear about much of the work needed to deliver our strategy, but there are some areas that will take more time to scope fully. We are mindful that our plans need to be capable of flexing to take account of external circumstances over the period covered by the strategy. For example, the coronavirus pandemic which is already having a significant impact.

We are developing a five-year view of the work ahead. The graphic below provides a high level overview of current plans. Our annual corporate business plan provides fuller detail.



Year 01

- Overseas assessment improvements
- New registration system
- New approach to Fitness to Practise fully implemented
- Regulatory reform response
- Post registration standards development
- New values and behaviours framework established
- New organisation structure
- Embedded four nation engagement

Year 02

- New risk based quality assurance of education programmes
- Agree approach to advance practice
- New framework for local engagement
- Development of new website
- Environment Sustainability plan introduced
- Public engagement charter agreed

Year 03-05

- New management system for Fitness to Practise
- Code reviewed in co-production and published
- New approach to revalidation agreed and introduced
- Deliver agreed approach to advance practice
- Annual State of Nursing and Midwifery Report
- Student survey introduced
- Public information campaign

06

How will we know that we are succeeding?



People will experience us as:

- Effective and fair in our core regulatory work, with sound, proportionate and timely decisions reinforcing confidence in our professions.
- Supporting our professions to uphold high standards of practice, and anticipating their future needs.
- Evidence-informed, using our own and others' insights to evaluate our work, and contribute effectively to collaborative work toward wider learning and improvement.
- Approachable, visible and connected – strong relationships at national and local level with the specialisms and sectors that inform our regulatory approach.
- Providing good customer service, being responsive and kind in our interactions with people who are involved in our work.
- A valued collaborator especially with those partners such as educators and employers that we rely on to help us uphold high standards of practice.
- Actively supporting the public, our professions and partners to understand and shape what we do.
- An organisation with the culture, skills, and resources to deliver on its strategic aims.

Our corporate plans will set out further detail on the measurement of our progress in delivering our strategy. We will track a combination of performance metrics, perceptions, longer term evidence, and programme level milestone delivery in order to obtain a rounded picture of our progress.

We welcome the regular review of our work by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) and we will continue to use the PSA's insights to learn and improve.

Some of the measures we anticipate using include:

- Performance indicators that help us monitor the quality and timeliness of our core regulatory processes.
- Reporting on benefits delivery at the programme level.
- More robust research and evaluation on our impact.
- Customer experience measures and perceptions audit.
- Evidence on stakeholder engagement – who, where, when and how.
- Media sentiment analysis.
- Employee engagement including our staff survey.
- Our performance against recognised equality and diversity benchmarks.

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This strategy sets out an ambitious programme of work that will require all of us at the NMC to make changes in how we work and behave.

As an organisation we will work hard to support this change in culture and provide everyone with the necessary practical tools and support. The process will not be immediate but over the five years we expect everyone working in and with our organisation to see visible differences.

We are confident that the many people who have given their time and expertise so generously over the last year to help us develop this strategy will continue to engage with us, challenge us, and stimulate our thinking and action over the next five years. We look forward to working together to ensure we support high standards of practice from nurses, midwives and nursing associates – in all of our interest.



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