



Corporate plan 2016–2017

Introduction

Who we are

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the independent nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Our purpose is to protect the public through efficient and effective regulation.

We aspire to deliver excellent patient and public-focused regulation and in doing this we strive to meet the Standards of Good Regulation developed by the Professional Standards Authority.

Our role

Our regulatory responsibilities are to:

- Maintain a register of all nurses and midwives who meet the requirements for registration in the UK.
- Set standards for education, training, conduct and performance so that nurses and midwives are able to deliver high-quality healthcare consistently throughout their careers.
- Take action to deal with individuals whose integrity or ability to provide safe care is questioned, so that the public can have confidence in the quality and standards of care provided by nurses and midwives.

Our strategy

Our Strategy 2015–2020: Dynamic regulation for a changing world challenges us to ensure that our approach to regulation is innovative, forward-looking and able to adapt to changes in healthcare and the demands on nurses and midwives. It sets out four strategic priorities which will enable us to deliver our overarching purpose to protect the public through regulatory effectiveness and impact. They are:

Strategic priority 1: Effective regulation

Strategic priority 2: Use of intelligence

Strategic priority 3: Collaboration and communication

Strategic priority 4: An effective organisation

In 2015–2016, the first year of the strategy, our focus was on improving the quality of our core work and laying the foundations for future changes. This corporate plan sets out the main pieces of work we will now undertake in year two of the strategy.

Commitments 2016–2017

Transforming the NMC (strategic priorities 3 and 4)

We are embarking on a substantial programme of transformation over the next four to five years. Work has begun to develop a clear picture of how we will transform the way we work. This includes the steps we need to take, the benefits this will bring and the investment we need to make.

We are committed to communicating with our staff and people on our register about what this means for both them and the NMC as we move forward.

We have already stabilised and strengthened our IT function and infrastructure. This provides a sound basis to build future IT capability to support and enable the transformational changes we are planning.

Good progress has also been made towards financial stability and we have delivered some £20m in efficiencies in fitness to practise since 2014. Transformation will require significant investment but will be key to driving forward further improvements in effectiveness and efficiency. Alongside this we will maintain financial discipline and a rigorous focus on value for money.

In 2016–2017 we will:

- Plan, resource and initiate our Transformation programme. The programme will cover all aspects of our organisation, people and location, as well as improving the experience of our customers.

Our organisation

- By October 2016, have defined what the organisation shape, size and business processes should be, and have published our transformation roadmap.

Our people

- Develop a People strategy that sets out the skills, capabilities and culture that the organisation will need now and for the future. This will address how we will attract, retain, support and reward people to meet our priorities.
- Produce a detailed plan to drive the achievement of the People strategy and deliver outputs in accordance with that plan once agreed.
- Complete a pilot management training programme to build management capability in our first level managers. We will then evaluate its effectiveness and the potential for full roll out.

Our location

- Develop a full accommodation business case, setting out costed options to enable us to make decisions on future accommodation and location by March 2017.
- In parallel, produce a transition plan to implement the recommended option in the accommodation business case.

Value for money

- Deliver a stretch target of five percent against the approved budget (excluding funds allocated for transformation) to drive value for money, which we will monitor and report against.

Commitments 2016–2017

Effective regulation (strategic priorities 1 and 3)

Education

Our strategy puts education at the centre of our regulatory work. Ensuring that nurses and midwives are equipped for the future in the context of a rapidly changing care environment is critical to our role in protecting the public.

Education will be a major focus for us over the next four years, led by a newly appointed Director of Education, Standards and Policy supported by a new directorate.

We have already begun work on the skills and competencies nurses will need for the future. We will be looking at all aspects of our role in education and we will continue to engage closely with stakeholders as we take this work forward. In doing so, we need to take account of government changes and other initiatives such as future funding of nursing and midwifery education.

The Department of Health's plans for a new nursing associate role represent a highly significant development for the nursing profession. We will continue to engage closely with government and stakeholders as the proposals develop.

In 2016–2017 we will:

- Draft new standards setting out the skills and competencies required of the future nurse, ready for consultation which will complete in 2017–2018.
- Engage with stakeholders through the work we are doing to develop new standards.
- Commission an independent fundamental review of how nursing and midwifery education could be quality assured in the future, resulting in a set of options by March 2017. This review will take into account the changing arrangements for quality assurance in the higher education sector more generally.

Midwifery regulation

Changes are underway to strengthen public protection by distinguishing between midwifery regulation and supervision. In July 2015 the Secretary of State confirmed legislation would be introduced at a suitable opportunity to remove the additional tier of regulation governing midwifery, including statutory supervision.

We have been working with the Department of Health to agree the scope of the changes and with midwifery stakeholders to promote understanding of the reasons for, and implications of, the proposed changes. We have also been working closely with the four Chief Nursing Officers who are leading the development of a new model of clinical supervision, outside of professional regulation. Our Midwifery Panel has been put in place to support the transition from the current to the new arrangements, while the Midwifery Committee continues to fulfil its current statutory role.

In 2016–2017 we will:

- Continue to support successful transition of midwifery supervision in all four countries of the UK.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive communication plan to ensure that stakeholders have a clear understanding of regulation after the legislative change.
- Update our own policies, systems and processes to ensure we are ready for the consequences of legislative change in midwifery regulation.

Fitness to practise and registration

During 2015–2016, we introduced Case Examiners to make earlier and speedier decisions on cases referred to us, and began working towards a target of resolving cases within 15 months.

We have begun to see an improvement in the speed of case progression and in the delivery of more consistent and proportionate decisions.

We anticipate that important changes to our legislation to improve the fairness, efficiency and effectiveness of our fitness to practise functions will be finalised in 2016–2017. These changes will further improve our ability to reach proportionate outcomes quickly and will bring our powers in line with those of other regulators.

Revalidation is changing the way we engage with nurses and midwives and provides the public with assurance that nurses and midwives remain fit to practise throughout their careers.

We have successfully launched revalidation – all nurses and midwives on our register will revalidate over the next three years. We are committed to undertaking an evaluation of our model.

In 2016–2017 we will:

- Prepare a detailed plan so that we are ready to implement the significant changes to our legislation to ensure we can resolve fitness to practise cases in the right way at the right time. This will include developing policy and process for additional powers for Case Examiners and the Investigating Committee, and the development of systems and processes to support the changes.
- Monitor the operational effectiveness of revalidation in its first full year of implementation and ensure continuous improvement to the process and our systems.
- Make it easier for nurses and midwives to pay their registration fee by rolling out the facility to make payments in quarterly instalments.
- Maintain and continue to improve our regulatory performance (as measured by corporate KPIs) throughout transformation.

Commitments 2016–2017

Use of intelligence (strategic priority 2)

The use of intelligence is at the centre of our ambitions for the future. Improving our insight, from our own data and research, is key to becoming a dynamic regulator. We hope to gain new insights into what we do, helping us to become more effective, transparent and proportionate. However, we are still in the early stages of our work in this area.

We have, however, taken some significant steps forward including the establishment of our UK-wide Employer Link Service to work in partnership with healthcare providers to improve patient safety and ensure higher standards of care.

In 2016–2017 we will:

- Develop our strategic capability to enable us to articulate our data and intelligence requirements.
- Determine what research we should invest in, and use the outcomes to inform our work.
- Be in a position by March 2017 for our Employer Link Service to begin analysing data from FtP referrals and employer settings. This will enable wider risk-based interventions at an earlier stage to enhance public protection.

Commitments 2016–2017

Collaboration and communication (strategic priority 3)

Communication is at the heart of all the commitments made within this corporate plan.

We have already begun to transform the way we engage with nurses and midwives through NMC Online: over 88 percent are now signed up.

Successful launch of the new Code and revalidation, including innovative use of social media and a multimedia revalidation microsite, has mobilised the support and enthusiasm of the professions and other stakeholders. We will continue to build on this to strengthen our engagement with the professions.

During 2015–2016, we collaborated with the General Medical Council (GMC) to launch the first ever joint guidance for doctors, nurses and midwives on the professional duty of candour. This guidance enables healthcare professionals to fully understand their individual responsibilities to speak up, apologise and take action if things go wrong. We aim to identify further opportunities for collaboration with other regulators, particularly the GMC, where this has the potential to enhance public protection.

In addition, in 2016–2017 we will:

- Improve our access to the views of patients and the public through new public and patient networks in each of the four countries and use this to shape and inform our work.



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