

Corporate plan 2017–2018



Introduction

About us

We are the independent regulator for nurses and midwives in 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 to deliver our overarching purpose to protect the public.

Our strategic priorities

1

Effective regulation

2

Use of intelligence

3

Collaboration & communication

4

An effective organisation

Overview

This plan is about the third year of our five year strategy. Our plan for 2017–2018 builds on what we have already achieved and takes forward work already begun in the past two years.

It sets out our corporate priorities and commitments to make further progress towards our ambition to be an intelligent, dynamic, leading regulator, delivering best value for money for nurses' and midwives' fees.



Our achievements so far

Over the past two years, we have made major strides in strengthening the way we regulate, including:

- introduction of our **new Code** of professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives, which is the cornerstone of good nursing and midwifery care
 - implementation of **revalidation**, which has been welcomed positively by the professions and is already proving a major success
 - initiation of our **education strategy**, a four year programme to make sure our education standards equip the nurses and midwives of the future
 - expansion of **NMC Online**, enabling nurses and midwives to interact with us more easily and pay the annual fee in instalments
 - improvement of fitness to practise processes by introducing **case examiners** to decide if cases should be closed after investigation or proceed to adjudication
 - introduction of a new **Employer Link Service** to help employers refer the right cases to us
 - securing of legislative changes to strengthen **midwifery regulation** and fulfilling our moral commitment to support transition to new non regulatory clinical supervision arrangements across the four countries.
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Alongside this, we have continued to improve performance of our core regulatory functions and moved towards financial stability, while holding the fees paid by nurses and midwives at the same rates as in 2015.

We were pleased that the Professional Standards Authority recognised these and other significant achievements, resulting in our best ever performance review report, making us one of the best performing regulators.

Strategic context

Our corporate plan also needs to be informed by the ongoing rapid changes in both the health landscape and wider society in which we operate.

Regulating for four countries

As a four country regulator, we are acutely aware that we must always be alive to the increasingly different approaches and developments in health and care policy and how it is delivered in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Our strong relationships with all the administrations are key to this but we will continue to strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the differing frameworks in place and how these interact with regulation.

A new profession

A significant development with long term future implications for our work is the introduction of a new addition to the nursing family – nursing associates. Following the Government's decision that this role requires regulation, we agreed to the Government's request to be the regulator for nursing associates. This expansion of our role represents a significant new responsibility and demonstrates confidence in us and our work. We will work with the nursing profession, stakeholders and partners to be ready to begin registering the first new nursing associates in early 2019.

The wider picture

Other recent or potential developments which may impact on our work next year include:

- The ongoing **economic and performance pressures** on health and social care; changes in the need for care; and how and where care is delivered which affect us all.
- The potential implications of **Brexit**. Along with other regulators we have sought to reassure EEA qualified workers there will be no immediate change to how we approach applications for registration and no impact on those already working here. As developments unfold we will continue to pay close attention to the impact on the nursing and midwifery workforce and our work.

- Significant changes in the **higher education sector** which have implications for our approach to specifying and assuring the quality of education provision for nurses, midwives and, as we begin this work, nursing associates. Allied to this, the Government's plans to introduce **apprenticeships** will have implications for nursing and midwifery qualifying routes, as for other professions.
- **Possible regulatory reform.** We, together with other regulators, have long pressed for modernisation of our legislation. We look forward to contributing to the Government's proposed forthcoming consultation and continuing to help shape and influence the future of regulation. At the same time, we will continue to take forward our work with other regulators to look at innovations in how we can work collaboratively without legislative change.
- **Strategic collaboration.** Exploring the scope to share activities and functions with other regulators where it makes sense to do so and can offer enhanced public protection.



An overview of our priorities for 2017–2018

The strategic context will inform our work both next year and into the future. We have five specific priorities for 2017-2018 that focus on taking forward four major programmes of work already begun or underway, while continuing to deliver our core regulatory functions.

Delivery commitments for these are stated on pages 10-13, but they are summarised here as:

Education

Beginning to deliver the first outcomes of our strategy and beginning work on other elements

Nursing associates

Developing the regulatory framework, processes and systems to be ready to begin registering the first new nursing associates in early 2019

Fitness to practise

Maximising the benefits of further legislative changes to further modernise our approach focused on early engagement, reaching the outcomes that best protect the public at the earliest opportunity

Transformation

Implementing the first phase of our major organisational transformation programme, subject to the Council's decisions in July 2017

Core regulatory functions

Continuing to maintain our current strong performance.

In addition to our specific delivery commitments on pages 10-13, we will continue to maintain a strong focus on the following priorities in all aspects of our work:

Midwifery regulation

Supported by the Midwifery Panel, to include monitoring the transition of supervision, while taking forward our commitment to ensuring that the Council as a whole takes responsibility for midwifery regulation and that matters affecting midwifery and maternity services are mainstreamed within NMC business.

Data, information and intelligence

Seeking to improve our ability to understand and use the data and information we collect and hold, providing insight and intelligence as part of becoming a dynamic regulator. This includes designing this into our transformation programme where appropriate.

Patient and public perspectives

Improving our understanding of the views and prevailing attitudes of the patients and public we exist to protect to inform and strengthen our work, including through consultation with patients and the public at key stages in development of our processes, policies, and standards.



Our delivery commitments 2017–2018

Strategic priority 1: Effective regulation

Education

By 31 March 2018 we will have:

Nursing

- Published new competency based pre-registration education standards ready for early adoption from September 2018 and full roll-out by September 2019, taking into account the views and feedback from the public, patients and all our stakeholders.

Midwifery

- Prepared draft new competency based pre-registration education standards ready for us to begin testing with midwifery professionals, educators, patients, the public and other stakeholders.

Nursing and midwifery education programmes

- Published a new education framework setting out the requirements for institutions seeking to deliver approved programmes, taking into account the views and feedback from the public, patients, the profession and stakeholders.

Nursing and midwifery education quality assurance

- Continued development of our approach to quality assurance of education.

Nursing and midwifery post-registration standards

- Reviewed prescribing, medicines management, and return to practice standards, taking into account the views from the public, patients and stakeholders, and revised these standards if appropriate.

Nursing associates

By 31 March 2018 we will have:

- Developed and consulted on both standards of proficiency and standards for education for nursing associates. In doing so, we will consult with and listen to the views of patients, the public and our stakeholders.

Fitness to practise

By 31 March 2018 we will have:

- Implemented legislative changes to address fitness to practise concerns proportionately and quickly having taken into account the views of patients, the public and our stakeholders. Case examiners will have begun to use new powers to give advice, issue warnings and agree undertakings in cases as appropriate.

Maintaining core regulatory performance

Throughout 2017–2018 we will:

- Maintain strong performance against our key targets for Registration and Fitness to Practise.
- Continue to report on our customer service performance and improvements introduced as a result of customer feedback.



Strategic priorities 2–4: Use of intelligence; collaboration & communication; an effective organisation

Transformation

Our Transformation programme is key to operating more effectively and efficiently in how we deliver our core regulatory functions and improve both customer service and value for money in the future. It is a four year programme which will involve development of our people, our location, our technology and modernisation of our services.

New systems and services using advances in technology are an essential first step: a new contact centre will be at the forefront of our investment in 2017–2018. This will bring our services in line with best practice, providing improved access and choice for all who interact with us or need our services. Designing in quality, achieving a better customer experience and delivering best value for money for nurses' and midwives' fees are key objectives for this initial phase of investment.

A phased approach to delivery of the transformation programme is proposed to ensure a safe transition to new ways of working.

Our approach to Transformation is subject to final decisions by the Council in July 2017.

People

Investment in our people and capabilities is key to our success. Our People strategy will set out our approach to how we attract, recruit, retain, develop, engage, motivate, recognise and reward our people. It will articulate our commitment to the development of our workforce, making the NMC a place where people want to work with us to achieve our aims. We will embed equality, diversity and inclusion in everything we do, so that people can see that their contributions are valued and recognised.

Transformation and people

By 31 March 2018, subject to the Council's decisions in July 2017, we will have:

- delivered the first phase of the contact centre, including procuring appropriate accommodation.
- delivered the first phase of a new customer relationship management system and associated new technology.
- implemented the first elements of the People strategy, including improved HR and OD capacity and delivery to support staff and managers through the first phase of transformation.





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The nursing and midwifery regulator for England,
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