



Business Plan 2026-27

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Foreword

We are building a new NMC — determined to establish the organisation as the strong and independent regulator that everyone wants to see.

In our recent history, the NMC has been subject to a number of critical reports which have highlighted issues with our culture, racism, our Fitness to Practise process, and failures of systems.

Now that we have an almost completely new executive team, we have turned a new page and are determined once and for all to fix the issues at the organisation — so that we can deliver our core purposes of protecting the public, promoting the nursing and midwifery professions and upholding the standards.

The public, nursing and midwifery professionals, and our stakeholders all need an NMC that consistently sets and delivers high standards, meeting and surpassing the requirements of the *Standards of Good Regulation*, as set out by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), as we seek to achieve regulatory excellence.

Over the last year, we have set about transforming the culture at the organisation — having published our three-year [Culture Transformation Plan](#) in March 2025.

We are determined to build a culture that is empowering, positive and inclusive — underpinned by a strong commitment to anti-racism.

Our 2026-27 business plan shows how we will deliver on our ambitions, during this business year, reflecting the ambitions set out in our current 18-month strategy, *Building a New NMC*, which was published last September.

Over the past year, as well as making progress in strengthening our culture, we have also improved our regulatory performance — with our Fitness to Practise process achieving the best timeliness rate since late 2020, with 74% of cases being resolved end-to-end in a timely fashion.

Meanwhile, we have also [published a consultation](#) on our practice learning review, and are making good progress with the work to update our Code and Revalidation process by autumn 2027.

In May 2026, we will publish our ambitious anti-racism principles for midwifery and nursing education and practice, which will contribute to tackling the Black maternal health crisis.

(continued)

Foreword

There is still a long way to go, but our progress is clear.

It has been made despite the pressing financial challenges we have faced, caused by the decision to freeze registration fees for 11 years resulting in a 28.8% decline in the real value of fees income over the last decade, to the loss of £186m of income.

Due to this challenging financial landscape, we have been drawing down our reserves, contracting these from £101m in March 2024 to £49.6m in March 2026.

In order to stabilise our finances, we made the difficult decision to remove 10% of our roles in the last business year and have put forward a plan to increase our fees by £1.92 per month from October 2026.

Our financial plans for 2026-27 ensure we are investing in the areas that matter most to deliver our priorities and long-term transformation. Further detail on our income, expenditure and financial position is set out in the accompanying [budget approved in March 2026](#).

During 2026-27 our priorities are aligned to the themes set out in our strategy, which are:

- Ensuring trust in professionals
- Improving Fitness to Practise
- Culture transformation
- Strengthening leadership
- Modernising the NMC.

This is a vital year for the NMC. We are determined to continue with our three-year plan to transform our culture and our performance — enabling us to turn the organisation around once and for all.



Paul Rees MBE
Chief Executive and Registrar

1. Building a new NMC: Strategy 2025–27

The [NMC Strategy 2025–27](#) sets out our priority areas as we continue to transform our culture and improve our regulatory performance. The strategy builds on our [Culture Transformation Plan](#) and [Fitness to Practise Plan](#), through which we have already made major strides.



Building a new NMC: Strategy 2025–27

NMC vision

Safe and effective nursing and midwifery education and practice across the four countries of the UK — regulated by the NMC — a fit for the future organisation, with fairness and equity at the heart of everything that we do.



Ensuring trust in professionals

Reviewing and enhancing our regulatory tools to better protect the public and support professionals

NMC mission

To be a strong and independent regulator that protects the public and inspires confidence in the nursing and midwifery professions — by setting and upholding high professional standards.

- We achieve our mission through a positive and inclusive culture that enables our people to thrive.
- Achieving our mission will ensure we are an effective part of the wider health and social care system.



Improving Fitness to Practise

Improving the fairness, timeliness and quality of decisions while focusing on safeguarding and equity



Culture transformation

Creating a fair and positive culture to become an effective, safe and trusted regulator and employer



Strengthening leadership

Building a new NMC with stronger accountability and united, values-based, empowering leadership



Modernising the NMC

Updating our technology, systems, legislation and learning to be more agile and efficient

NMC values

We're building a new NMC with:

- **Integrity**
- **Fairness**
- **Respect**
- **Equity**
- **Effectiveness**

Detail on costing can be viewed in [our annual budget](#).
The budget accommodates all activity within our strategic priorities.

2. Planning principles

Our key planning principles include:



Keeping the plan
lean and actionable



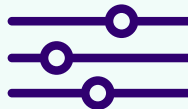
Fostering accountability
through specific deadlines,
and treating it as a living
document that adapts to
constant change, rather than
a one-time, static task



Maintaining focus and discipline so the organisation
is well positioned for the next
phase of delivery



Using resources efficiently to
prioritise activity that delivers
the greatest public protection



**Responding proportionately
to emerging challenges**
where they align with our
strategic priorities



**Equipping and empowering
colleagues** to perform
effectively and sustainably

3. Strategic priorities

Over the **next 12 months** we will focus on:

1

Delivering safe, fair and effective regulation

2

Reducing delays and improving consistency in Fitness to Practise and education

3

Strengthening leadership, culture and fairness

4

Modernising our systems, governance and data

Strategic priority 1:



Ensuring trust in professionals

Reviewing and enhancing our regulatory tools to better protect the public and support professionals.

By March 2027, we will:

Review and update key regulatory tools so they reflect changing needs across education and practice, from students entering the Register to professionals in practice.

Outcome

Our professionals are trusted by the public and are supported to deliver safe and effective care.

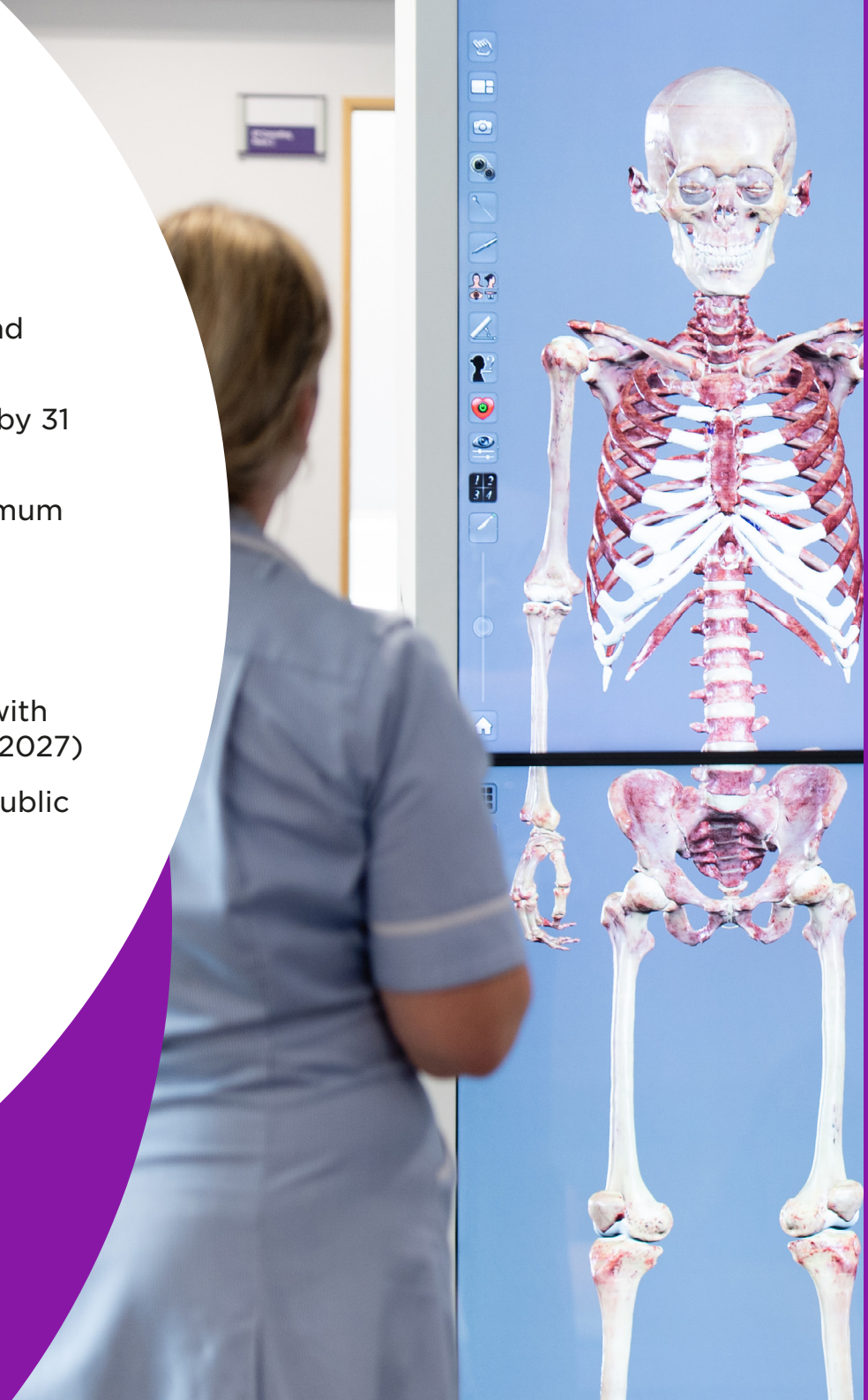


Review of practice learning requirements

- We will complete the public consultation on practice learning requirements (by July 2026)
- We will develop revised practice learning standards and assess financial implications (by 31 September 2026)
- We will seek Council approval for proposed changes (by 31 September 2026)
- We will begin transition to new standards, with a minimum two-year implementation period (from January 2027).

Advanced practice

- We will complete horizon scanning and engagement with early adopters to inform draft standards (by 31 March 2027)
- We will develop standards for advanced practice for public consultation (2027-28)
- We will deliver a registrant survey to inform standards development (June 2026).





Education standards and education quality assurance (EdQA)

- We will deliver the EdQA Development Plan (by 31 March 2027)
- We will upgrade EdQA case management and quality tracking systems (by 31 March 2027)
- We will improve EdQA processes using D365 automation and workflow (by 31 March 2027)
- We will strengthen EdQA capacity and capability through new and additional roles (by 31 March 2027)
- We will assess technology options for proactive monitoring of Approved Education Institution performance (by 31 March 2027)
- We will strengthen partnership working with the current quality assurance provider (by 31 March 2027)
- We will reduce disproportionate outcomes in nursing and midwifery education and training (ongoing; reviewed quarterly).

Review of the Code and Revalidation

- We will refresh the Code through public consultation and analysis (consultation September - November 2026; analysis December 2026 - March 2027)
- We will update the Revalidation process following consultation (consultation September - November 2026; analysis December 2026 - March 2027)
- We will confirm requirements for advanced practitioners as part of the Code and Revalidation reviews (by 31 March 2027)
- We will ensure the Code reflects key issues raised by stakeholders, including equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), AI, professional behaviour outside work and delegation.

Midwifery Action Plan

- We will publish FAQs on the Principles for supporting women's choices in maternity care (by 31 March 2027)
- We will publish anti-racism principles for nursing and midwifery education and practice (by 31 May 2026)
- We will support implementation of anti-racism principles across education and practice (by 30 September 2026)
- We will enable system regulators to apply these principles through inspection activity (by 31 March 2027).

Integrity of our Register

- We will ensure our policies, processes and procedures are followed, undertaking stronger quality assurance checks (by 31 March 2027)
- We will strengthen the integrity of the Register by improving the consistency, fairness and proportionality of registration decisions (by 31 March 2027)
- We will strengthen fraud controls and review international registration policy and processes where required (by 31 March 2027).





International registrations

- We will complete computer-based training hearings and capture learning (by 30 September 2026)
- We will launch the Patient Safety Intelligence Forum to assess international education risk (by 30 June 2026)
- We will complete a discovery phase on international registration policy and process (by 30 September 2026)
- We will agree the scope of a Test of Competence review (by 31 January 2027).

Registrations

- We will complete quality assurance checks on registration decisions (by 30 June 2026)
- We will review health and character assessment processes (by 30 June 2026).

Policy and partnership working

- We will strengthen international and European partnerships to detect and prevent registration fraud (by 31 March 2027)
- We will support improved information-sharing arrangements across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland (by 30 September 2026)
- We will clarify registration requirements for specific international applicant cohorts, including those linked to Ukraine (by 31 March 2027).

Strategic priority 2:



Improving Fitness to Practise

Improving the fairness, timeliness and quality of decisions while focusing on safeguarding and equity.

By March 2027, we will:

Focus our Fitness to Practise transformation on processes, people and systems to reduce delays, improve consistency and strengthen fairness.

Outcome

Those involved in our Fitness to Practise processes have experiences which are progressively more equitable, person-centred and proportionate. Decisions are made more promptly, without compromising quality or fairness.





Reduce delays

- We will deliver the Right Referral, Right Place programme to reduce unnecessary referrals and improve referral quality (through 31 March 2027)
- We will embed stronger disclosure practices with third parties to reduce avoidable delays (by 30 June 2026)
- We will introduce legally qualified chairs and new case management powers, subject to rule changes (timing subject to approval)
- We will implement a new investigations operating model and progress 350 cases to case examiner decisions (by 31 December 2026)
- We will strengthen operational performance management through targeted coaching and training (1 October 2026 - 31 March 2027).

Strengthen equity and fairness in Fitness to Practise

- We will introduce proactive debiasing measures across Fitness to Practise processes (delivery plan agreed by 30 June 2026)
- We will embed priority bias-mitigation actions for early decision-makers using data and insight (by 30 June 2026)
- We will deliver targeted training on discrimination in regulatory contexts, including anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate (by 30 September 2026)
- We will deliver EDI training for Fitness to Practise decision-makers to recognise and mitigate bias (by 31 March 2027)
- We will implement and review bias-mitigation interventions for early decision-makers (interventions in place by 31 December 2026)
- We will deliver enhanced anti-racism training for panel members (by 31 December 2026)
- We will continue EDI case clinics for complex cases and share learning across teams (by 31 March 2027)
- We will deliver a consistent quality assurance framework through the Fitness to Practise Improvement Plan, with EDI embedded (by 30 September 2026).

Improve decision-making quality and use of clinical advice

- We will improve the clinical advice process and increase its use across Fitness to Practise casework (by 31 December 2026)
- We will introduce targeted investigation pathways, including testing a Dedicated Clinical Pathway Hub with early clinical input (by 31 December 2026)
- We will strengthen quality gateways in Investigations and CPP to reduce rework and improve consistency (by 31 December 2026)
- We will embed updated removal and warnings guidance across decision-making (by 30 September 2026).



Improve communication, engagement and safeguarding

- We will embed the reset customer contact process and track performance quarterly (embedding by 30 June 2026)
- We will deliver trauma-informed training so colleagues apply trauma-informed approaches consistently
- We will improve communications with people involved in our processes (by 30 September 2026)
- We will deliver the next safeguarding plan to strengthen engagement, wellbeing and operational assurance (by 31 December 2026)
- We will evaluate the health pilot and agree next steps (by 30 September 2026)
- We will introduce new rules to strengthen support for witnesses in hearings (in force by 31 December 2026, subject to approvals)
- We will embed safeguarding consistently through targeted training and assurance (by 30 September 2026).

Manage incoming concerns proportionately

- We will implement new investigations ways of working to improve efficiency and progress an additional 350 cases (by 31 December 2026)
- We will deploy the new case management system to improve efficiency and case progression (deployment by 31 March 2027)
- We will improve hearing facilities and transcription to enhance timeliness and user experience (by 30 June 2026)
- We will implement the legal services review to support timely and proportionate case progression (by 30 June 2026)
- We will strengthen operational management capability and cross-department working (1 October 2026 – 31 March 2027)
- We will establish a dedicated Fitness to Practise service quality and improvement function (by 31 March 2027).



Strategic priority 3:



Culture transformation

Creating a fair and positive culture to become an effective, safe and trusted regulator and employer.

By March 2027, we will:

Deliver a sustained programme of culture transformation so the NMC is experienced as **fair, respectful, inclusive and values-led**, and culture actively supports effective regulation.

Outcome

An increasingly positive, empowering and inclusive culture that enables us to become an effective, safe and trusted regulator and employer.

Progress will be measured through the **Culture Maturity Model**, with the ambition to operate at a 'Leading' level by **2027-28**.



Reconnecting colleagues to purpose and fairness

- We will strengthen colleagues' connection to our regulatory purpose and fairness through improved induction and role-specific learning, including patient and registrant perspectives (learning scaled by 31 December 2026; targeted follow-up by 31 March 2027).

Strengthening management capability and consistency

- We will deliver a structured Management Development programme so managers can set expectations, manage performance and wellbeing, and intervene earlier (launched by 30 June 2026; expanded by 31 December 2026; embedded by 31 March 2027).

Embedding equity, inclusion and psychological safety

- We will embed equity, inclusion and psychological safety so colleagues feel safe to speak up and experience fairness consistently (core activity delivered by 30 September 2026; targeted action through 31 March 2027)
- We will maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination, and review the Fairness at Work policy to ensure it remains clear and trusted (by 30 September 2026).

Regulatory fairness

- We will embed equity, inclusion and anti-bias objectives across regulatory functions, with a focus on Fitness to Practise decision-making (by 31 December 2026)
- We will improve communications with registrants, witnesses and others, informed by the Ambitious for Change review and stakeholder feedback (by 31 December 2026).

Delivering Independent Culture Review recommendations

- We will deliver the Independent Culture Review recommendations, with clear governance and oversight, and demonstrate sustained progress against agreed milestones (by 31 March 2027).



Strategic priority 4:



Strengthening leadership

Building a new NMC with stronger accountability and united, values-based, empowering leadership.

By March 2027:

Leadership is experienced as inclusive, confident and values-led. Leaders consistently role-model expected behaviours, take collective responsibility for outcomes, and create the conditions for people and teams to perform at their best. Leadership decisions balance clarity, fairness and accountability, supporting strong organisational performance and trust internally and externally.

Outcome

A united leadership group that shares accountability to drive the organisation forward as 'one NMC'.



Clear leadership expectations

- We will embed clear leadership expectations in objectives, recruitment, appraisal and development, reinforced by coaching and feedback (objectives by 30 June 2026; people processes aligned by 30 September 2026; reinforcement through 31 March 2027).

Leadership governance and alignment

- We will strengthen leadership governance and decision-making through a single leadership spine (Senior Leadership Group and Leadership Group), supported by consistent performance, culture and risk reporting (arrangements embedded by 30 June 2026; reporting established by 30 September 2026; alignment and barrier removal through 31 March 2027).

Leadership development and capability

- We will build leadership capability at all levels through mandatory development, coaching, feedback, and talent and succession planning (programme and first 360 cycle launched by 30 June 2026; coaching delivered by 30 September 2026; succession planning introduced by 31 December 2026; learning consolidated after a second 360 cycle by 31 March 2027).

Improve performance against the PSA Standards of Good Regulation

- We will develop and agree a delivery plan to increase the number of standards assessed as 'met' (by 30 June 2026).



Strategic priority 5:



Modernising the NMC

Updating our technology, systems, legislation and learning to be more agile and efficient.

By March 2027 we will:

Align investment to strategic priorities to improve efficiency, data quality and user experience and deliver £500,000 of non-pay savings through the 'War on Waste' programme.

Outcome

Technology and systems which enable us to be more agile and efficient internally, and to better support our regulatory operations. A measured reduction in non-pay waste and more focused and disciplined cost control and contract management.



Technology and data

- We will deploy transcription software for Fitness to Practise hearings (by 30 June 2026)
- We will deploy redaction software to improve document handling (by 30 September 2026)
- We will deploy reporting automation to improve management information (by 31 December 2026)
- We will deliver a common data model and publish priority datasets (from 1 July 2026; further releases from 1 January 2027)
- We will replace spreadsheet-based processes with D365 automation (by 31 March 2027)
- We will replace the legacy Fitness to Practise case management system (development by 31 December 2026; live by 31 March 2027).



Prepare for reform of the NMC's governing legislation

- Subject to Council's decisions, we will amend the NMC's Fees and Fitness to Practise rules (by 30 June 2026).
- We will commence regulation of nursing associates in Wales, once confirmed by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).
- We will develop the new NMC Order by undertaking policy and legal work by 31 December 2026, in readiness to deliver the public consultation on the new NMC Order by 30 April 2027.

External relationships

- We will deliver a coordinated programme of strategic stakeholder engagement with clear ownership
- We will coordinate consultations centrally with early stakeholder input
- We will strengthen UK-wide professional forums to support two-way engagement
- We will use system intelligence to identify and respond to emerging risks and opportunities.

If you have any questions or for more information, [please do get in touch](#).

This document is also available in Welsh on [our website](#).

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn y Gymraeg [ar ein gwefan](#).



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The Nursing and Midwifery Council

The nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362)