

Narrative

Last Updated: 20/05/2021

We want to see safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the independent regulator of more than 808,000 nurses and midwives in the UK and nursing associates in England, we have an important role to play in making this vision a reality.

We're here to promote and uphold high professional standards, which the public has a right to expect. That's why we're improving the way we regulate, enhancing our support for professionals and the public, and working with our partners to influence the future of health and social care.

Regulate

Our core role is to regulate nursing and midwifery. First, this means setting the education standards that nurses, midwives and nursing associates must meet to join our register, and the professional standards they must follow in practice. Those standards apply no matter where people work – in a hospital, in social care, in the community, in public health, or in education. It's a priority for us to innovate in the way we shape these standards, so that our professions keep pace with a rapidly evolving health and care sector.

The coronavirus pandemic has shown how much this responsive approach matters. In just a few weeks we produced emergency education standards that enabled 35,000 students to do extended placements across the UK. This helped to relieve pressure during the emergency.

Second, we maintain the register of professionals eligible to practise. Our revalidation process helps make sure they keep developing their knowledge and expertise, to maintain excellent standards of practice throughout their careers. This principle of lifelong learning is an important part of our approach to regulation.

Third, we investigate concerns about nurses, midwives or nursing associates – something that affects a tiny minority of the professionals on our register each year. We determine whether their skills, knowledge, education or behaviour fall below the standards needed to deliver safe, effective and kind care.

We believe in giving professionals the chance to address concerns, but we'll always take action when needed. This can include removing people from our register in the most serious cases.

Support

To make sure we regulate as well as possible, we proactively support our professions and the public. This helps us strike the right balance between promoting excellent practice and investigating rare cases of poor practice. It also ensures that the people we work with are at the heart of everything we do.

For example, Covid-19 affected practice nationwide, so we published guidance to support nurses, midwives and nursing associates. We also collaborated with our partners on a joined-up approach to issues affecting our professions during the emergency. And we delivered recovery standards to support students as the pandemic developed.

We create resources that are useful throughout professionals' careers, not just in times of emergency. We help nurses, midwives and nursing associates to deliver our standards and address future challenges, such as new and emerging technologies.

A fraction of our professionals will face the challenge of being involved in our investigations. We offer them emotional and practical support, and foster a culture of openness and learning that supports them to improve their

practice.

Our public support service listens to people who raise concerns and helps them understand how we can respond. People can ask our public support officers anything they're unsure about, and we'll meet them in person if it helps. We're increasing our visibility so people are better informed about us, and know what they can expect from nurses and midwives in these unprecedented times and beyond.

Being more visible also helps people feel engaged in our work and empowered to shape it. This means we can better understand the diversity of practice, the many settings our professionals work in, and the different needs of people they support. We know what a difference nurses, midwives and nursing associates make for people needing care; together we can make sure that everyone gets the support they deserve.

Influence

Regulating our professions effectively and supporting those we serve well allows us to influence the development of health and social care. We play a key role in the sector, working with our partners to address common concerns and drive improvement.

This has been especially important during the coronavirus pandemic. We've worked with the UK government and devolved administrations, the royal colleges and unions, employers, educators and others in health and social care. Our aim has been to support the national response to Covid-19 and help save lives.

During the emergency and in normal times, our partners rely on the data and insight we offer. This comes from our register and other regulatory activities, like revalidation and fitness to practise. We share this intelligence to help reveal the true state of the nursing and midwifery professions, and inform decision making.

Modern care is based on teamwork that crosses traditional professional boundaries, so we work with other health and care regulators to develop consistent ways of regulating. By working together we can collect and analyse useful data around issues like equality, diversity and inclusion.

We know there is discrimination leading to inequalities in care. We're making our regulatory processes fair to everyone, because we value the diversity of the professionals on our register and the public we serve. We'll highlight inequalities whenever we see them, and collaborate with our partners to change any imbalance.

Where we're heading

We've identified five themes that will shape our work between now and 2025. And we know what success looks like in each area. Achieving these successes will help us realise our vision for nursing and midwifery, and become the best NMC possible.

- [Our services will be easily accessible to everyone.](#) It will be easier for overseas professionals to join our register. And we'll take context into account during our investigations.
- [Nurses, midwives and nursing associates will have more access to better resources.](#) And the way we regulate will help them adapt to future challenges, like the changing needs of people who use services.
- [We'll be helping to shape health and care policy and practice development.](#) We'll better understand the range of environments that the professionals on our register work in. And people who use our services will enjoy quicker, more personal responses.
- [We'll have stronger relationships with our partners across the UK.](#) We'll have embedded co-production as our standard approach to developing standards and policy. And the public will have a better understanding of our role.
- [Our partners will see us as a leading voice, and they'll benefit from our insights and ideas.](#) We'll have a track record of speaking up for a healthy and inclusive working environment for our professions.

Fit for the future

To achieve our vision and become the best NMC possible, we also need to develop the right capabilities, infrastructure and culture.

The capabilities we're building include horizon scanning, which means analysing the future of health and care so that we make the right decisions about our work. We're using more of our registrants' expertise in decision

making; we already have registrants as colleagues and advisers, and we'll find new ways for professionals to shape what we do. We'll also improve our customer service, and work hard to give equal opportunities for our NMC employees.

We'll continue to improve our technology so that colleagues have the tools they need to work efficiently, for the benefit of our customers. We'll modernise the systems that support our regulatory work and help us make our data and insight even more influential.

Just as important as what we do is how we do it, so our values and behaviours determine the way we work. We're fair, because fairness is at the heart of our role as a trusted regulator and employer. We're kind, acting in a way that values people. We're collaborative, recognising that we're at our best when we work well with others. And ambitious to do our best for the professionals on our register, the public we serve, and each other.