



Bord Altranais agus  
Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann  
Nursing and Midwifery  
Board of Ireland

## NMBI Statement of Strategy 2020-2022

**Relevant, research-based,  
right-touch regulation**

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## Foreword: President and Chief Executive

As demographics and our workforce change, technology is rolled out and new models of care are implemented, nurses and midwives who make up a third of healthcare staff, will play a pivotal role in patient experience and outcome.

In this context we remain committed to building trust, ensuring our role is understood, becoming more efficient and effective, and thereby having an organisation that is appropriately equipped for the years to come.

This new statement of strategy which covers the years 2020-2022 and reflects input from our broad stakeholder group, will continue to engage, support and empower our registrants and peers and will focus on:

- professional competence
- professional development
- fitness to practise
- improved customer service and the timely handling of complaints
- the launch and roll out of our new registration system
- effective communication with relevant stakeholders, and
- our contribution to relevant policy and the delivery of guidance to nurses and midwives.

We would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of our strategy. We would also like to thank our other Board members and colleagues whose ongoing commitment to our goals we deeply appreciate. We look forward to supporting more improvements in our eco system with the implementation of this plan.



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**Essene Cassidy**  
President



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**Sheila McClelland**  
Chief Executive

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## Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI): who we are

**We are**  
the regulatory  
body for  
the professions  
of NURSING  
and MIDWIFERY  
in Ireland

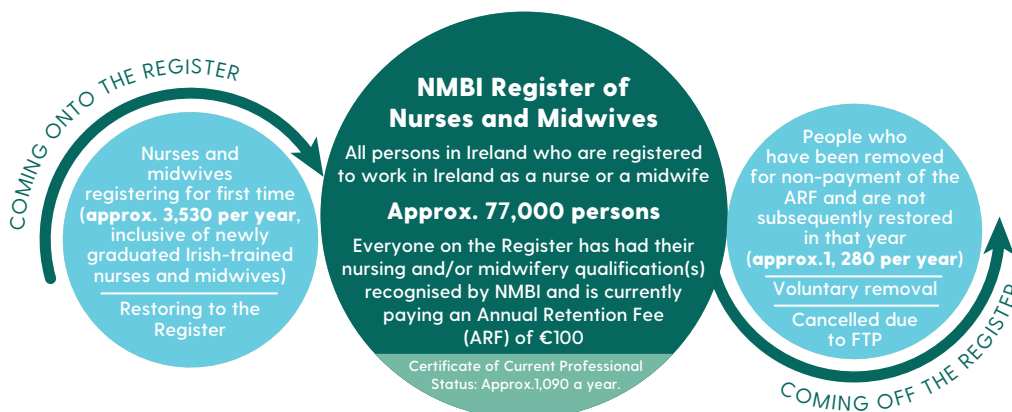
**Our Vision**  
is to provide leadership  
to registered nurses  
and midwives in delivering  
safe care through innovative  
and proactive professional  
regulation.

**Our Mission**  
is to protect the public  
and the integrity of the  
professions of nursing and  
midwifery through the  
promotion of high standards  
of education, training,  
and professional  
conduct.

### We do this by:

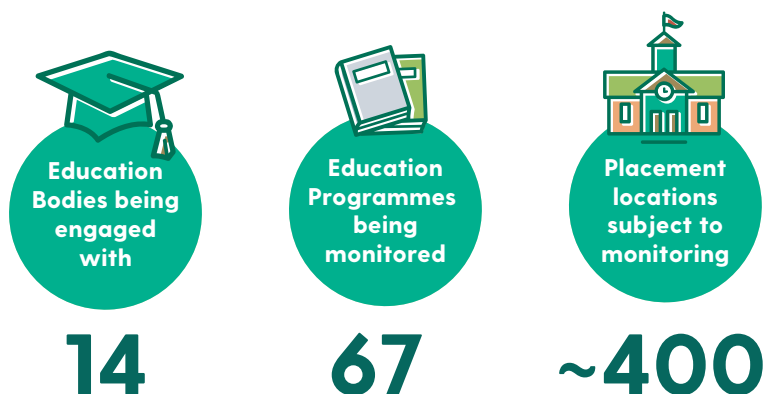
- maintaining the Register of Nurses and Midwives;
- promoting high standards of professional education, training and practice, and professional conduct amongst nurses and midwives; and
- investigating and considering complaints against nurses and midwives.

## NMBI Register



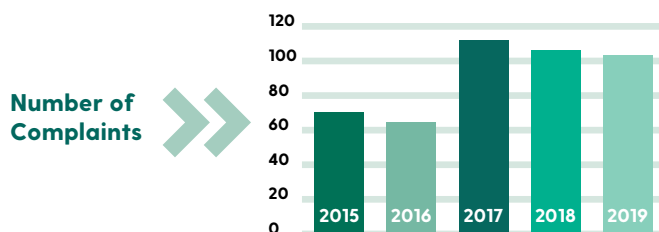
## Education

NMBI is responsible for setting standards for Education Programmes and regularly approving and re-approving programmes.



## Dealing with complaints

There are currently over 77,000 nurses and midwives on the NMBI Register. A very small number on the Register are the subject of a complaint each year, about 0.1 per cent of all registrants. In 2018, 113 complaints were received. In 2019 we have seen a similar level of complaints.



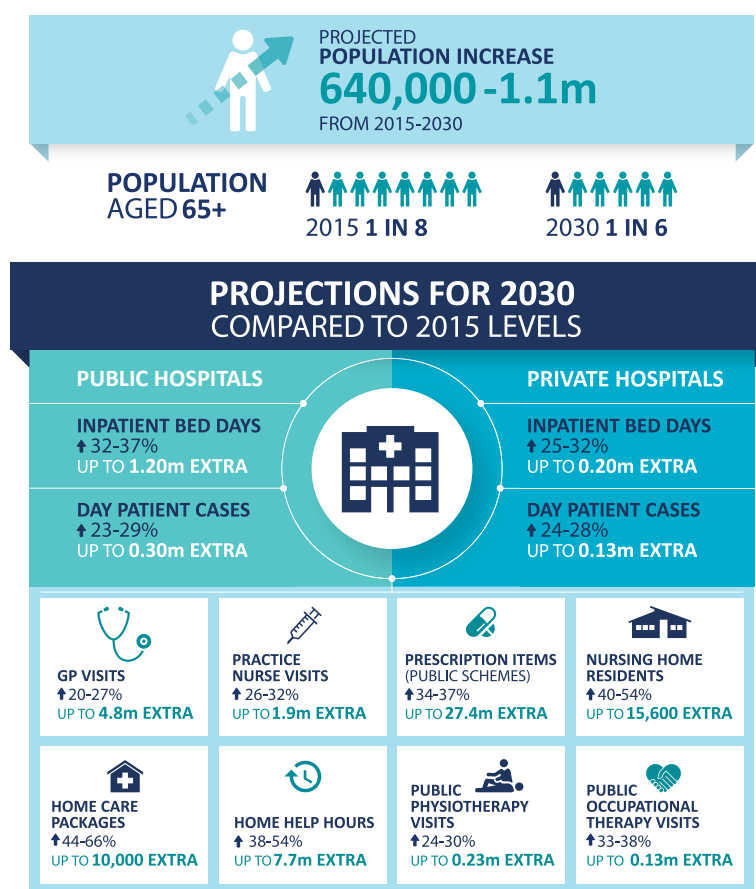
Should you wish to find out more, a guide on fitness to practise has recently been published and is accessible on our website.

## Our environment: healthcare regulation trends

Our statement of strategy looks to the future. In this section, we explore the healthcare environment in which we operate to anticipate how our regulatory model may need to respond.

### Workforce changes

The Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030 estimates a potential shortfall of up to 9.9 million healthcare workers globally by 2030. Ireland is no exception to this trend and as the regulator we need to ensure that while we maintain standards we also make the registration process for overseas nurses and midwives as easy as possible.



*Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Projections of Demand for Healthcare in Ireland, 2015-2030*

### Population demographics

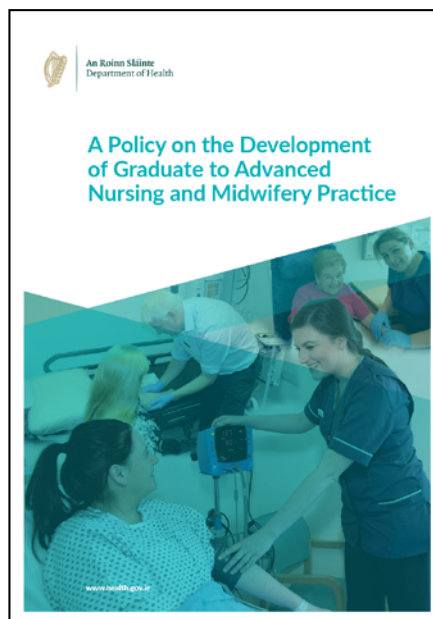
Ireland's population is ageing and with this development comes a requirement to care for people with more complex health needs. Some 60% of those over the age of 50 report having at least one chronic condition. Many of these conditions mean that our registrants will be involved in preventative care, ongoing management and care of patients with multiple conditions. Our education standards need to prepare nurses and midwives to be responsive to the changing expectations of care.

## Models of healthcare

Government policy is shifting to more care being delivered in the community and at home, and an increase in the shared responsibility for delivery of care from expert teams.<sup>1</sup> New roles will also feature and evolve in these healthcare models, for example advanced nurse practitioners and advanced midwife practitioners.<sup>2</sup> Nurses will be required to work across healthcare settings and support integrated models of care provision.

The national maternity strategy<sup>3</sup> also proposes multiple pathways for the provision of care and includes the development of a community midwifery service in which hospital midwives, working as part of a multidisciplinary team, provide antenatal and postnatal care in the community.

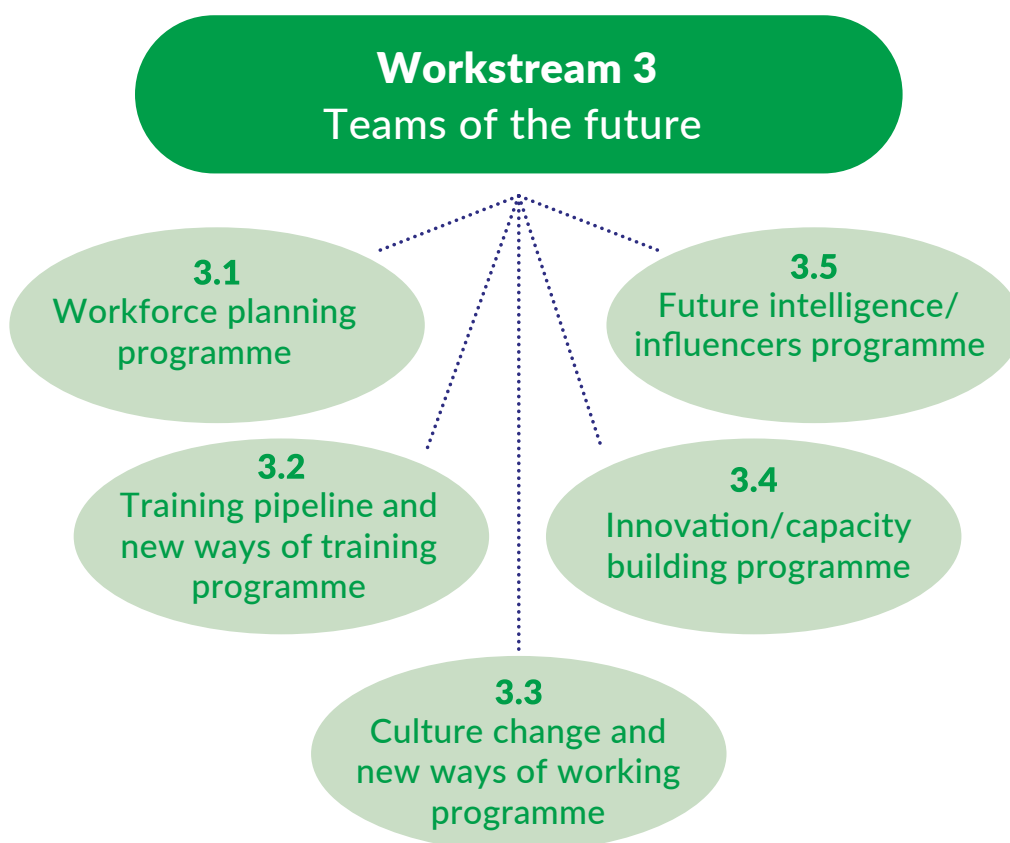
Changes to standards, guidance and educational requirements will need to happen as the working environment for nurses and midwives evolves.



<sup>1</sup> Sláintecare, May 2017.

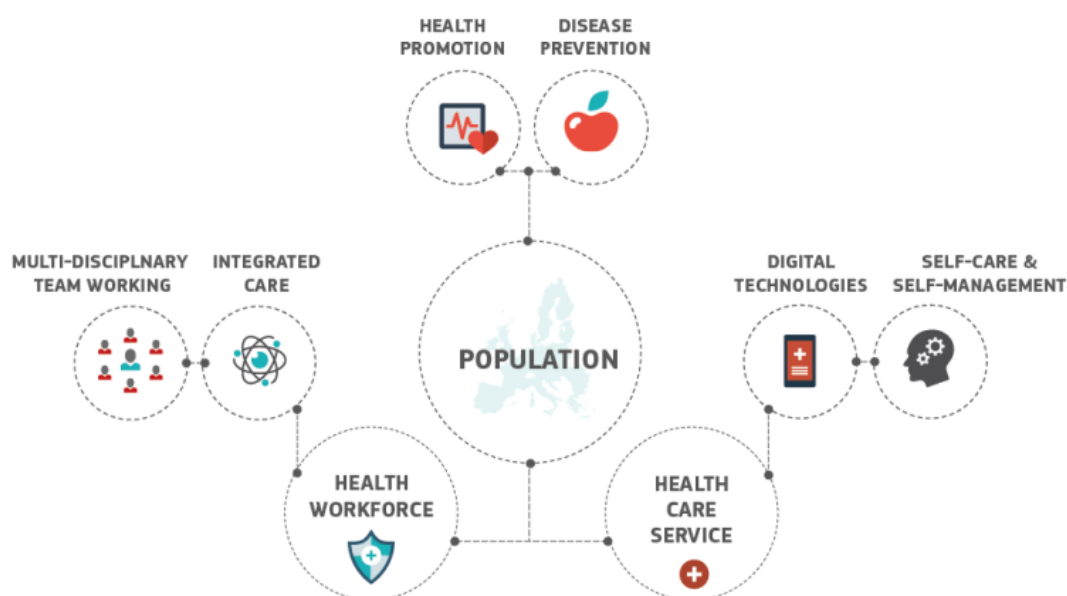
<sup>2</sup> A Policy on the Development of Graduate to Advanced Nursing and Midwifery Practice: <https://assets.gov.ie/19260/f49c5ea1a19843b0aae20151aeaf694d.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> National Maternity Strategy – Creating a Better Future Together 2016-2026.



Sláintecare Action Plan 2019

## THE DRIVING FORCES INFLUENCING FUTURE SKILLS AND COMPETENCES



European Commission Health Workforce

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## Technology

Global developments in technology will also impact our workforce with unpredictable consequences. This will involve the potential for new roles and skill development as well as the automation and redundancy of other roles. Examples include online nursing and midwifery services, electronic records and new diagnostic tools. The use of technology may present new challenges for registrants. NMBI's standards and guidance must reflect these real-life practices.

Advances in technology also offer many opportunities to us as a regulator in terms of how we engage with our registrants and stakeholders in the delivery of our services.



## The changing face of regulation

Regulators and regulation can never stand still.

In light of recent developments in healthcare more consideration is being given to how we handle complaints. Evidence suggests that encouraging and supporting all our registrants in their practice can have a far greater impact on patient safety than dealing with the small percentage of registrants who are the subject of a complaint. Under this statement of strategy we will introduce better and more timely complaint handling.

Additionally, there is a clear expectation that regulators will improve their collective understanding of their regulated populations. We will increasingly be able to do this based on our data and that of others, ensuring that the way we regulate increasingly focuses on identifying risk and preventing harm.

Supporting this, we will also continue to deepen our relationships with educators and employers, so that regulatory data and insights can be used as an early intervention to instil behaviours and practice that result in better patient outcomes.



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## Data

Data gaps are evident and are impeding progress in healthcare. In 2018, this was referenced in the *Report of the Public Service Pay Commission*; the *Health Service Capacity Review*; and the *Framework for Safe Nurse Staffing and Skill Mix in General and Specialist Medical and Surgical Care Settings in Adult Hospitals in Ireland 2018*.

More data, more evidence and frameworks are required. NMBI must therefore do more to ensure that it is gathering data, analysing it, sharing it (in line with good governance and data protection) and using other data to support our registrants and public safety outcomes in a more efficient and effective way.

## Conclusions from the analysis of our environment

Our challenge in this changing environment is to regulate effectively while upholding the standards that govern registered nurses and midwives operating in Ireland. We need to engage with our registrants in a way that encourages and supports achievement and improvement. We will do this in collaboration with other regulators, our registrants, educators, employers and our broader stakeholder group.

Over the next 10 years we aim to:

- have our role in the healthcare eco-system better recognised and valued;
- be agile in response to healthcare and regulatory trends and challenges that face our registrants;
- have a customer service that is monitored, timely and efficient;
- have a learning culture that is also shared externally; and
- have the required primary and secondary legislation to support our mandate.

In this context, we have developed a three-year strategy, which we detail below.

## The core of what we do

Support registrants and protect the public by establishing standards and requirements to practise in Ireland

### Primary Legislation

#### Registration

- set standard for education programmes
- evaluate applications
- maintain the Register

#### Retention

- set standards, publish guidance and *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives* and *Scope of Nursing and Midwifery Practice Framework*

#### Review

- investigation of complaints against registrants. Not all complaints finish up in fitness to practise as some are completed at preliminary proceedings stage

#### Restoration

- the Board evaluates applications for restoration to the Register under the grounds set out in legislation

## Strategic Priorities 2020-2022

### Improving the way we operate

- 1 Evolving our model of regulation
- 2 Digitising and improving the efficiency of our services
- 3 Leveraging data and research
- 4 Communicating more frequently and effectively with our stakeholders, and
- 5 Further developing our organisation.

## Our strategic priorities

In recent years we have focused on improving our core functions which we will continue to do for the next period, 2020-2022. We plan to further strengthen our impact by focusing on the following strategic priorities:

### 1 Evolving our model of regulation

#### Actions

- Regularly review our code, education standards and guidance to ensure that they remain relevant to what nurses and midwives are experiencing on the front line and in other diverse areas.
- Participate in interdisciplinary working groups to ensure that evolving models of healthcare are supported, patients are protected and registrants are confident in delivering care. Interdisciplinary working groups would include registrants, patients, policymakers, educators, employers, unions, professional bodies and other regulators.
- We will finalise the design of the *Managing the Maintenance of Professional Competence Scheme* (MMPC) and start the roll-out to strengthen a culture of continuing improvement. This will ensure that continuing and existing personal development is recognised, regarded and fully used in service delivery.
- We will explore options to widen access pathways to registration while maintaining confidence in competency.
- We will undertake a project to establish mechanisms for assessing qualifications which are submitted to NMBI frequently by applicants who meet required standards.
- While we will always follow up complaints, we aim to increase our support of registrants in their delivery of safe patient care.

#### Indicators of success

- Ongoing evolution of educational standards and requirements (e.g. incorporating more community-based placements) through more direct connectivity with Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and stakeholders to ensure that programme content evolves to meet the needs of the sector and the population.
- Revised *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics*, professional standards and guidance documents.
- Participation in interdisciplinary teams to develop a regulatory framework that reflects the multidisciplinary models of healthcare envisaged under Sláintecare while ensuring that nurses and midwives scope of practice remains understood, defensible and safe.
- For nurses and midwives who trained outside the EEA and who wish to join the Register, we have revised mechanisms to assure their competence.
- Revised processes to manage complaints and fitness to practise (FTP) inquiries aligned with new legislation. We need to be more empathetic to the needs and expectations of both complainants and registrants, in order to move through the process more efficiently.

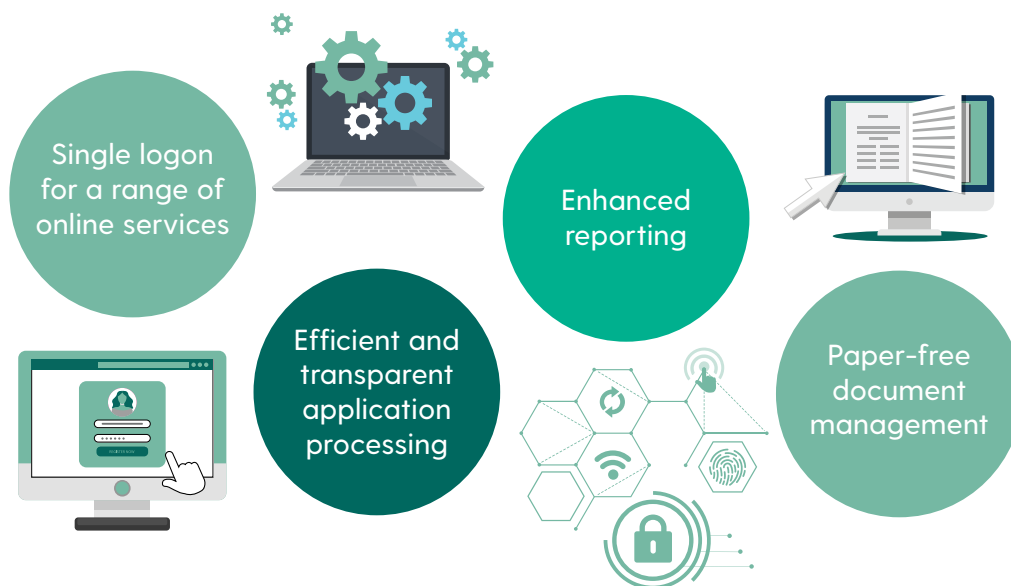
## 2 Digitising and improving the efficiency of our services

### Actions

- Streamline the registration process for applications giving them enhanced self-service options, including the option to pay online and get easy access to their records and data.
- Ensure that systems are created to capture relevant evidence of qualifications, experience and professional history for all registrants, applicants and graduates.
- Ensure that all educational service providers have a full understanding of our education standards, provide adequate evidence to satisfy requirement and have a full appreciation of areas for improvement.
- Create an open, efficient and effective pathway to manage complaints within the legislative process.

### Indicators of success:

- new registrants portal
- new applicants portal
- new HEI portal
- online renewal and payment of the annual retention fee (ARF)
- visibility of complaints tracking
- updated IT strategy with clear milestones
- reduced processing times, and
- Increased stakeholder satisfaction. Positive perception of customer service. Results in line with customer charter and customer action plan.



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### 3 Leveraging data and research

As a regulator, we gather data on our applicants, registrants, complaints, concerns, educational programme assessments and site inspections. To ensure we use this data effectively to support registrants and protect the public within our legislative framework and GDPR we will:

#### Actions

- Share data insights with our registrants and other stakeholders to support our registrants, protect the public and inform policy.
- Share data on the Register to assist health services with workforce planning activities.
- Work closely with others in the healthcare sector so that we can collectively have more impact on protecting the public (sharing inspection reports, risk profiles).
- Use research and data to inform our policy approach. Using this evidence will enable us to develop a better understanding of the landscape in which our registrants work, making our work more effective and proportionate.
- Use data to continually improve what we do, for example review fitness to practise complaints and inquiries to determine if outcomes can be achieved more quickly or in a different way.

#### Indicators of success

- Risk informs the development of our policy and research programmes.
- Our data and research findings support the development of public policy.
- Key influencers in education and health use and reference reports produced by NMBI.
- NMBI resources are allocated to research and policy development
- Attendance at cross-regulatory events.
- The regulatory load on educational providers and registrants is reduced through collaboration with other regulatory bodies.

### 4 Communicating more frequently and effectively with our stakeholders

While we communicate frequently with our key stakeholders we will place increased focus in this next phase on how effective these communications are. To support the 2020-2022 strategy we will in the first instance consider the standard and tone of our content and the channels we deliver it through. With improvements and mechanisms in place for effective and efficient communication we will address the lack of understanding of our role (2019 Reputation Inc. survey of our stakeholders). Later in 2020 and into 2021 we expect to become more proactive with those stakeholders who can amplify our message and make our role and its value understood and appreciated.

#### Action

- Develop and implement a strategic communication plan which focuses on content and efficient channels for communication while also accounting for significant developments in the business calendar that will need to be proactively supported i.e. our new online registration system.

- Develop and implement a customer action plan which will include:
  - » outlining the nature and quality of service that customers can expect
  - » clarifying our role and using every opportunity to explain what we do and how we do it
  - » updating our website with clear and easy to understand content, and
  - » conducting listening events.

#### Indicators of success

- Refreshed and correct content on key communications channels and for presentations (e.g. website, information booklets) consideration of what the right channels are for NMBI.
- Proactive plan on educational stakeholder engagement.
- Proactive initiatives to support greater understanding of our role.
- Consideration of better and more innovative ways to communicate and explain topics to registrants.
- Listening events regularly conducted to improve communication with our stakeholders.
- Changes to our policies and standards being developed collaboratively with stakeholders.

## 5 Further developing our organisation

Significant change will happen over the next three years and our people and our Board will be instrumental in our success. For this reason their ongoing professional development over this period will be important.

#### Actions:

- Support staff in their acquisition of the knowledge, skills and competencies to do their jobs effectively and with confidence.
- Support the Board in its delivery of our governance structure.
- Review the structure of our organisation to allow for the effective and efficient delivery of our legislative remit.
- Continue to develop a rolling three-year workforce plan.
- Continue to abide by the *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies* and other national and EU legislation including the *Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty*.
- Identify further ways to streamline the usage of Board time.

#### Indicators of success

- NMBI staff and the NMBI Board have the skills and knowledge to do their roles effectively.
- Stakeholders will report increasing satisfaction with customer service, which is measured against a customer charter and customer action plan.
- Our governance structures will provide effective assurance that we have the right strategies, plans and programmes to deliver the change we need.
- We have planned for and facilitated a smooth transition for key members of our senior management team and our board who are due to retire or finish their term.

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- Our Board is using more efficient and effective processes, including an updated approach to fitness to practise matters.
  - We have undertaken an assessment to address *Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty*.

## Implementing our strategy and measuring success

This statement of strategy will cover the three-year period (2020–2022). Each year we will develop an annual business plan designed to deliver on our strategy. We will also publish the minutes of Board meetings and an annual report, enabling stakeholders to assess our progress.

Progress will be reported against defined measures and milestones. The measures will be of a quantitative and qualitative nature. Quantitative measures will include: application processing times, query handling times, the number of complaints received about registrants, and the number of complaints resulting in fitness to practise hearings.

A number of assumptions have been made in the development of this statement of strategy e.g. those about our resources, staffing levels, and government priorities. Assumptions come with inherent risk. We plan to manage these risks through advance planning, regular monitoring of our risk register and by working closely with the Department of Health and other relevant parties.

We will proactively identify gaps in capacity and skills as they arise and bring them to the attention of the Board or the Department of Health, as appropriate. The timely sanctioning of posts and continual assessment of funding will be critical.

We will continue to work with our stakeholders through open and transparent engagement.

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## Appendix A: Developing the statement of strategy: our consultation approach

### The consultation process

On 1 July 2019, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland launched a public consultation seeking submissions to support the development of our statement of strategy 2020–2022.

A questionnaire was made available to everyone on our website. Registrants, staff organisations, employers, managers, patient advocate groups and other key stakeholders were emailed the questionnaire inviting them to participate. Several meetings and workshops were also held to invite input into the development of the statement of strategy.

### Overview of responses to consultation

Source	Number
Online survey	298 respondents
External Meetings	4
Internal workshops	6

Submissions received on behalf of institutions and organisations included:

- Services Industrial Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)
- Health Services Executive, Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services
- Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO)
- Irish Association of Directors of Nursing and Midwifery (IADNAM)
- The Psychiatric Nurses Association of Ireland (PNA)
- School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Cork
- Hibernia College
- Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland (PSI)
- Bons Secours Hospital Limerick at Barringtons
- Ireland East Hospital Group.

For further details, please refer to our Statement of [Strategy 2020–2022 Public Consultation Report](#).





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