



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

Statement of Strategy Consultation Report 2020-2022

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About the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)

NMBI is the regulatory body for the professions of nursing and midwifery in Ireland. We have a statutory obligation to protect the integrity of the practice of the professions of nursing and midwifery and to protect the public. We perform our functions in the public interest under the Nurses Act, 1985 and the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011.

We do this by:

- maintaining a Register of Nurses and Midwives
- setting and promoting high standards of professional education, training, practice and professional conduct among nurses and midwives, and
- investigating and considering complaints against nurses and midwives who practise in Ireland.

The Consultation Process

On 1 July 2019 we launched a public consultation seeking submissions as we developed our Statement of Strategy 2020-2022.

A brief questionnaire (see [Appendix 1](#)) was made available through a link on our website. This was open to all. Registrants, staff organisations, employers, managers, patient advocate groups and other key stakeholders were emailed directly inviting them to participate, and the link to the questionnaire was included. In all, approximately 65,000 ezine emails were sent. A number of meetings and workshops were also held to invite input on the development of the Statement of Strategy.

Overview of Responses to Consultation

Table 1: Methods of consultation

Method	Number of respondents
Online survey	298
External meetings	4
Internal workshops	6

Respondents to the online survey were asked if they were providing feedback in a personal capacity or on behalf of an institution or organisation.

Table 2: Classification of respondents

Classification of respondents	Number and % of respondents
In a personal capacity	299 (97%)
On behalf of an institution or organisation	9 (3%)
Total	308

Submissions were received on behalf of the following institutions and organisations:

- SIPTU
- Health Service Executive (HSE), Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services
- Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO)
- Irish Association of Directors of Nursing and Midwifery (IADNAM)
- School of Nursing and Midwifery, University College Cork
- Hibernia College
- Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
- Bons Secours Hospital Limerick at Barringtons
- Ireland East Hospital Group

This report presents the key, consistent themes that emerged from the consultation process, followed by our responses to the findings.

What You Said

Models and settings of healthcare are changing

Many respondents highlighted changes in models and settings of healthcare. Some have already taken place and others are coming in the near future. As the regulator NMBI needs to respond and support registrants through these changes. While public safety is crucial, so too is the integrity of the practice of nursing and midwifery.

Some of the changes highlighted by respondents included:

- Technology
- The evolving role of healthcare assistants
- Multidisciplinary teams
- Care currently taking place in community and primary care settings and plans to further expand these under Sláintecare, e.g. practice nurses, RNIDs.

Suggestions from respondents to support registrants in these times of change included:

- NMBI needs to be visible and present at the table when future models of healthcare are being discussed.
 - » For example, one respondent suggested that curricula for programmes leading to registration in the Intellectual Disability division of the NMBI Register should be aligned to *Shaping the Future of Intellectual Disability Nursing In Ireland* (a HSE strategy; NMBI was part of this Steering Group).
 - » Another respondent suggested that 'a National Workforce Development Plan requires input from NMBI. NMBI are key stakeholders in terms of influencing the future direction...'
- Nurses and midwives require guidance on change, e.g. on delegation to healthcare assistants. NMBI can continue to do this through guidance documents but a physical presence and visibility at grassroots level would be welcome.
- Education Standards and Requirements need to reflect the settings and roles which graduates will find themselves in.

Our response

Our *Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives* will be updated early in the period covered by our next statement of strategy. This will include a broad consultation process.

The standards and requirements for programmes leading to registration were developed and published after a consultation process. A two-year lead time was given to the providers of the undergraduate programme to develop their curricula and related documentation, and the use of standards and requirements commenced in September/October 2018. This will be reviewed after the first cycle of the degree programme. Part of our continuing dialogue with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is the use of an appropriate mix of placement sites that align with registered nurses and midwives who deliver care. HEIs inform us regarding the use of new clinical placement sites.

- We currently provide guidance in the form of publications and online resources. We will endeavour to expand these publications and improve resources using information gathered following consultation with nurses and midwives.
- We will continue to be a source of support for nurses and midwives, acknowledging the specific needs of these separate professions.

Professional competence and professional development

Respondents welcomed plans to introduce a scheme to monitor the maintenance of professional competence (MMPC) to ensure public safety, but they are keen to understand:

- what it will entail
- when it will be in place
- how they will balance it with their existing work activities.

Respondents also wanted clarity on:

- education pathways for ANPs¹ and AMPs²
- education pathways for those returning to practice.

¹ Advanced Nurse Practitioners

² Advanced Midwife Practitioners

Our response

MMPC

In 2019 we conducted a public consultation on current MMPC practices to understand what is already being done and to gather insights that could be used to shape our future MMPC scheme.

Under the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011, we are mandated to develop a scheme(s) for the purpose of monitoring the maintenance of professional competence of registered nurses and registered midwives. This will formalise what many of our registrants are already doing in the course of their normal day-to-day practice. The Act provides that all nurses and midwives have a responsibility to maintain professional competence and employers shall facilitate the maintenance of professional competence of nurses and midwives.

Having engaged with stakeholders and looked at the most recent evidence base for MMPC schemes, we plan to consult on a draft scheme in 2020 and to conduct a pilot of the scheme the following year.

Standards for ANP and AMP are available on [our website](#). We implemented changes in September 2019 that have provided clarity on the path to ANP and AMP registration.

Applicants can now meet the standard by successfully completing an approved programme. Applicants can also apply for registration through a development pathway where the applicant provides evidence of completion of an equivalent programme and achievement of competence to register as an ANP and AMP. Applicants are no longer required to submit a portfolio, attend an interview nor have an ANP or AMP job offer.

Education pathways

Education pathways for those returning to practice are linked to our MMPC scheme.

At the moment returners to practice who have not practised in the last five years are recommended to attend a return to practice programme. When the MMPC scheme is established returners to practice will be required to demonstrate how they have maintained their competence. A return to practice programme may be a route that they pursue to meet this new requirement.

We approve or re-approve return to practice programmes every five years. The programmes themselves are provided by educational institutions.

Work settings can be challenging

Respondents highlighted many aspects of their work setting which provide both personal and professional challenges. They want to know why we are not more vocal on some of these matters.

Challenges raised by respondents included:

- Staff retention
- Management competence
- Leadership competence
- Staffing ratios and levels
- Lack of administrative support for staff nurses/administrative burden
- Pay
- General work-based problems
- Mental health and physical wellbeing of registrants

Our response

We are responsible for the regulation of nurses and midwives under the Nurses and Midwives Act 2011. As such, what we do is dictated by that legislation.

Essentially we:

- maintain a Register of Nurses and Midwives
- set and promote high standards of professional education, training, practice and professional conduct among nurses and midwives
- investigate and consider complaints against nurses and midwives who practise in Ireland.

As a regulator, we are committed to meeting our statutory mandate with regard to regulation, registration, education and standard setting. However, resourcing issues, staffing numbers and management structures in the clinical environment are legally outside our statutory remit. It is through the initiatives mentioned above that we support and enhance the nursing and midwifery professions in day-to-day practice.

continued

During this next phase of our development, and with the introduction of our new registration system, we will be able to provide enhanced data and insights to the Department of Health for workforce planning purposes (within GDPR guidelines).

We are also mindful that any changes we introduce to our rules, standards and requirements should not create unnecessary hurdles in registration or in the flow of suitably qualified resources to the Irish healthcare system.

If staffing or clinical environment issues are a factor in an individual fitness to practise case, they will be taken into consideration by the Fitness to Practise Committee.

Finally, we will continue to contribute at a policy-development level at policy forums, providing insights from our role as a regulator and a voice on the integrity of the practice of nursing and midwifery.

Timely handling of registration applications and fitness to practise matters

Respondents commented that the registration process is unnecessarily slow and the processes around applications for registration are unclear and not necessarily transparent. Overseas, non-EU applications were highlighted in this regard. In addition, timescales around fitness to practise matters are perceived as slow for the public, complainant and registrant.

Respondents suggested the following to improve process efficiency and transparency:

- Make registration application forms available for download.
- Introduce the facility to complete the application process online.
- Allow registrants to print annual registration certificates from the NMBI website.
- Provide more information regarding application timelines on the NMBI website.
- Put key performance indicators (KPIs) in place for the application process.
- Provide clarity around timelines and decisions.

Our response

We are committed to improving our registration process to make it more streamlined, efficient and less paper driven. Our registration processes have been reviewed and the first phase of our new registration system is going live in 2020.

The new registration system will enable applicants to submit their application and supporting documentation online. They will be able to view the status of their application online. And a new guide to registration will clearly articulate the process, timelines and decision-making involved.

Existing registrants will be able to renew their registration online, make changes to their profile through a registrant portal and handle all communication with us in an easier way. Certificates can also be applied for electronically.

This digitisation of our processes will continue in 2020 when we introduce a new module on the registration system which will support education programme approvals and monitoring. We will also be introducing a fitness to practise case management tool.

We anticipate that this investment in new technology and streamlined processes will deliver efficiencies and improve service turnaround times.

We have conducted research and published data on lessons to be learnt from complaints and fitness to practise hearings in the past and we intend to do so in the future. As the regulator we cannot advise individual registrants who are the subject of complaints. We understand the need for information and we have published a [specific information booklet](#) for nurses and midwives who are the subject of complaints.

The number of complaints received and the number of those that progress to fitness to practise hearings continue to be published as part of our annual report.

Conclusion

The consultation process has provided us with many valuable insights, suggestions and practical steps that we can take to improve our focus, efficiency and effectiveness. We have received clear messages from our stakeholders on their expectations of us. Central to this is open, participative engagement, working in partnership together to protect the public and the integrity of the practices of nursing and midwifery.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all those who took part in the consultation process. This report on the consultation process was reviewed by the Board of NMBI and the outcomes are reflected in our new Statement of Strategy 2020-2022, which is available on our website www.nmbi.ie.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Online Questionnaire

SECTION A – Details of Respondent (you do not need to provide your personal information if you would prefer not to)

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

Are you replying in a personal capacity or on behalf of an organisation?
(Choose from the dropdown menu)

Personal capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>
On behalf of an organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you are replying on behalf of an organisation, please enter the name of the organisation:

Free text box

What would be the one thing you would like to see in the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland's statement of strategy?

Free text box

Is the explanation of the role of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland clear and easy to understand? Please choose yes or no as appropriate.

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

continued

If “No” please comment

Free text box

Do you think our strategic priorities are appropriate in the context of our role and the environment in which we are operating?

Yes

No

If “No” please comment

Free text box

Do you think we have omitted any area of importance? Please choose yes or no as appropriate.

Yes

No

If “Yes” please comment

Free text box

What technological advances would you like to see in how we deliver our services?

Free text box

continued

What do you think we should be tracking and measuring to help us successfully deliver on our strategy? e.g. application processing times, query handling time, number of complaints about registrants received, number of complaints resulting in a Fitness To Practise hearing, number of educational programme site visits completed, etc.

Free text box

Are there any other comments you wish to make?

Free text box

Appendix 2: Copy of website notice

NMBI Statement of Strategy Survey

July 01, 2019

NMBI is conducting a survey about its strategic plan for 2020 and beyond.

As the regulator for nurses and midwives we are focused on protecting the public and the integrity of the practice of the professions of nursing and midwifery.

Whether you are a registrant, student, work in a hospital, care for people in the community, are a patient, an employer, a representative body or provide nursing and midwifery education programmes, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Participation in the survey which can be accessed here (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VH9N733>) is important and is much appreciated.

Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann, Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI), 18/20 Carysfort Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94 R299, Ireland.



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