



Crowe Horwath™



Organisation Review Recommendations to



Nursing and Midwifery Board of  
Ireland

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015

# Recommendations to NMBI

## 1. Overview

Our key recommendations, in no specific order of priority, are outlined in the following paragraphs.

## 2. The Proposed Reform Package at NMBI

**Package of reforms.** A substantial body of work is required within NMBI in order to address significant change across all aspects of NMBI's operations. The management of this package of reforms must be given top priority by the Board of NMBI, by its senior management team, and by the Department of Health. We would estimate that full implementation of all of the necessary reforms arising from these recommendations should be complete within 24 months.

**Recommendation 1:** The Board of NMBI should accept the recommendations arising from this review in their entirety, and with the support of the Department of Health should immediately commence a process of detailed project planning for the implementation of all of the recommended reforms over a period of 24 months.

**Leadership of the reform process.** The success of this reform process will be entirely dependent on NMBI having a highly effective leader in place who can demonstrate success in rebuilding an organisation which has experienced major difficulties and reputational damage; who has very strong leadership and empathetic people skills; who is a team player; and who has the dynamism required to deliver this package of reforms within two years. We would encourage the Board of NMBI and the Department of Health to consider very carefully how this leadership can be provided, and whether the necessary skills and experience are currently available within NMBI or need to be provided from outside.

**Recommendation 2:** The Board of NMBI, with the support of the Department of Health, should move very quickly to appoint a senior and experienced person to lead the reform process within NMBI over the next 24 months.

**Resourcing of the reform implementation package.** In addition to the leadership of the reform process, substantial work is required on many aspects of detail. Given that NMBI is currently lacking the full level of resources required to discharge its existing responsibilities, and that investment in new staff positions is required, it would be unreasonable to expect that the implementation of the reforms identified in these recommendations could be undertaken by existing NMBI staff in addition to their existing duties. As a consequence, and in recognition of the short-term nature of this work, we recommend that the majority of this work should be resourced externally, through a combination of consultancy expertise and fixed term appointments/secondments.

**Recommendation 3:** NMBI, with the support of the Department of Health, should move very quickly to put in place the necessary resources to deliver all aspects of the reform package over the next two years, covering all recommendations included in this document.

### 3. CEO and Senior Management Team

**New CEO Appointment.** We have noted above the need for leadership of the reform process within NMBI. We see this as being a short-term requirement, for a period of perhaps 18 to 24 months.

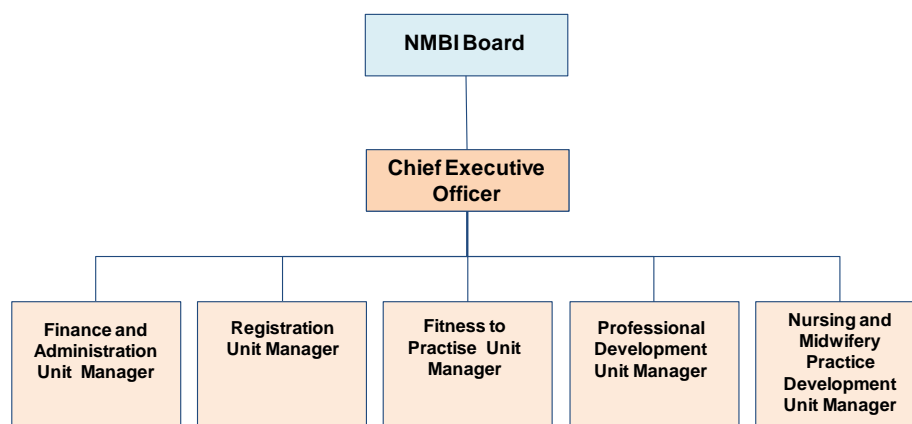
Undoubtedly, a new permanent CEO will be required within NMBI at some point in the future, but we believe that it is important to complete the reform process before such an appointment is made. In any event, there are two critical considerations which have influenced our recommendation in this regard.

Firstly, the appointment of a new CEO via a process of open competition would most likely take a period of 4 to 6 months to conclude, and potentially longer if a successful candidate were to have a period of several months notice to complete before taking up the position. NMBI simply cannot wait this length of time for a new permanent CEO to be appointed (i.e. a CEO who would also lead the reform process), and as a consequence we are recommending that the appointment be deferred, and that the leadership of the reform process should be commenced immediately, most likely through external resourcing.

Secondly, the skill set required for the new permanent CEO position after the reform process has been completed will be somewhat different from the leadership of that reform process; the new CEO would essentially be recruited to take over an organisation which is entering a period of stability after up to 2 years of reorganisation and re-engineering.

**Recommendation 4:** The appointment of a new permanent CEO should be deferred until the majority of the reforms have been successfully implemented, at which point the individual leading the reform process will be able to withdraw and hand the organisation over to the new permanent CEO, whose role will be more operational and strategic, and more geared towards the management of a steady state environment rather than being focused on reform.

**Senior management team.** All four members of the current NMBI senior management team are in either interim or acting roles. We also note that two senior members of staff, who previously served on the senior management team, are currently working on secondment in other organisations and have a right to return to NMBI. Overall, the structure and make-up of the senior management team needs to be regularised through the appointment of senior managers to permanent positions; in that context, we recognise that three members of the senior management team already have a substantive position within NMBI and are holding their current roles on a temporary basis, whilst the other member is on a temporary contract for a fixed term period. In our view, the optimum senior management structure for NMBI should be as follows:



One of these functional units should be headed by a senior manager also holding the role of Deputy CEO (this role exists in the current NMBI structure).

As with the current organisational structure, specific units should exist to handle all aspects of registration and Fitness to Practise. The education function has been retitled as the Professional Development Unit, which explains more accurately the remit of the unit, which is to cover all aspects of education, learning, and professional development for nurses and midwives.

We recommend the establishment of a new Nursing and Midwifery Practice Development Unit, which would cover new responsibilities for competency frameworks, professional standards, practice guidance, and engagement with other stakeholders to facilitate the enhancement of the practice of nursing and midwifery and its contribution to health service delivery.

We also recommend that the corporate services function should be retitled as the Finance and Administration Unit, and that a qualified accountant be hired as the manager in charge of that unit.

**Recommendation 5:** The organisational structure depicted above should be put in place within NMBI without unnecessary delay, and all posts within the senior structure should be filled on a permanent basis.

#### 4. Financial Resources and Funding of NMBI

**Financial resources and funding.** Urgent attention is required in relation to the financial position of NMBI, specifically with regard to its financial forecasts over the next three years, its income projections and its expenditure budget. Business cases for immediate investment in NMBI resources and IT infrastructure need to be submitted to the Department of Health urgently in order to ensure that additional financial support is forthcoming and that the organisation is financially sustainable in 2016.

**Recommendation 6:** The completion of the business cases requested by the Department of Health must be concluded immediately, i.e. no later than early December 2015. Expert resources are required to undertake this work and will need to be sourced by NMBI.

**Recommendation 7:** The medium to longer term financial position of NMBI needs to be examined in detail, and an effective plan put in place to ensure that NMBI's obligations can be met and that it can be financially sustainable over the coming years.

## 5. Functional Review of Processes at NMBI

**Functional review/re-engineering.** This review of the organisation structure of NMBI, and our consultations with external stakeholders, have identified that the organisation is not operating effectively or efficiently in all of its functional areas – registration, fitness to practice, education and corporate services. Given the nature of our review, it has not been within our terms of reference to explore these matters in detail, but it is nonetheless very apparent to us that some of these issues – particularly the workload involved in Fitness to Practice cases – relate to the nature of the legislation, and that NMBI may have limited control over how it discharges this responsibility so long as the current legislation remains in force. Other functional problems and concerns within NMBI – for example, those in registration – appear to be a combination of the processes used, the resources available, and the effectiveness of the IT systems. We therefore believe that would be timely for NMBI to undertake a comprehensive review of all of its business processes across all functional areas, and to consider how best these processes might be re-engineered in order to maximise effectiveness and efficiency. Such a review will also necessitate a detailed analysis of the IT systems required in each functional area, and the staffing resources required to deliver these services to an optimum level of effectiveness and efficiency.

**Recommendation 8:** A detailed review of all operational functions within NMBI should be commissioned urgently as part of the reform process, and any necessary re-engineering of functions should be undertaken, in line with parallel reviews of staff resources and IT systems.

## 6. Developing the NMBI Organisation Structure

**Developing the structure.** From our review, it is apparent that a comprehensive overhaul of the existing NMBI organisational structure is required. This review has highlighted a number of the deficiencies within the organisational infrastructure of NMBI, but the scope of this assignment and the timescales available to us have precluded us from undertaking a detailed review of the organisation structure and staff resources. Such a review is now essential, and must be conducted in line with the review of business processes referred to above. The core purpose of a detailed review of this nature would be to:

- develop a very clear understanding of the nature of each role required within the new NMBI organisation structure;
- assess the skills and competences required to discharge each role effectively;

- analyse the level of resource required in each functional area in order to ensure that all services are delivered effectively, efficiently, on time and to a high level of quality;
- develop detailed job descriptions and jobholder specifications for each position within the NMBI structure;
- assess the degree of fit between the requirements of the new structure and the present arrangements regarding staff deployment;
- recommend a course of action for NMBI to enable it to implement the new structures quickly and efficiently, including any potential retraining/skills enhancement required for existing personnel, and any new recruitment exercises needed.

**Recommendation 9:** A detailed review of organisational structures and resources at all levels should be undertaken within NMBI, and a new fit for purpose resourcing structure should be developed and put in place. This must be done in conjunction with the parallel reviews of business processes and IT systems.

## 7. IT Systems

**Investment in IT systems within NMBI.** It is widely held by managers and staff across NMBI that current IT systems in use within the organisation are in need of significant upgrade or replacement, and that a substantial investment is required in order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of all aspects of NMBI's operational functions.

**Recommendation 10:** A comprehensive IT strategy review should be conducted within NMBI, in order to establish the effectiveness of all existing IT applications and the supporting technology infrastructure, and to create a forward plan for information management and IT systems development within the organisation, including a forecast of the investment required over the next 2 to 3 years. This work should also include the development of business cases to justify any proposed investment, giving consideration to the full range of cost and benefits associated with each proposed systems project/investment. It would also be worthwhile for NMBI to liaise closely with other healthcare regulators as part of this process: certain functions, such as registration, are likely to be quite similar between the various professional regulators in Ireland, and the sharing of IT systems resources may be worthy of consideration by NMBI, other regulators, and the Department of Health.

## 8. Governance Arrangements

**Developing new governance arrangements.** Two key documents provide a very solid framework for governance within organisations such as NMBI – the *Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies*, and the Department of Health's *Framework for Corporate and Financial Governance* for regulatory bodies under the aegis of the Department. These documents should form the centrepiece for work to be commenced immediately within NMBI to enhance its governance arrangements.

**Recommendation 11:** NMBI should produce a new set of governance protocols in line with the *Code of Practice* and the *Framework* documents, and this should be agreed with the Department of Health and should be formally adopted by the Board of NMBI. This is essential so that the accountability and responsibility of the Board, the President, the Vice President, Committee Chairs, Committee members and Board members are clearly specified and regularly reviewed. NMBI must meet the specified standards of governance and accountability for state and other statutory boards. Effective and regular training should be provided for Board members and staff in relation to governance, and should be formally reported to the Department of Health on an annual basis. The governance protocols for NMBI should be easily accessible on the organisation's website.

**Recommendation 12:** A governance audit should be carried out by an outside experienced reputable organisation at least once every two years, with a full report being provided to the NMBI Board and to the Department of Health. This should also be included within the relevant annual report.

**Recommendation 13:** Committee structures need to be redesigned within NMBI, in line with our separate recommendation regarding the need to review the legislation governing Fitness to Practise proceedings, and also reflecting the need for new governance protocols to be developed within NMBI. An effective coordinating mechanism between the committees should be established, for example a Chairs' Coordinating Group composed of the President, Vice-President and chairpersons of the other committees, designed to examine cross-cutting issues and agree the presentation of business to the Board.

***Size and make-up of the NMBI Board.*** We believe that the size of the NMBI Board, at 23 members, is unwieldy. Best practice within corporate governance would suggest that the optimum size of a board should not exceed 10 or 11 members; some academic studies have suggested that the optimum size should be between 6 and 8. Whilst there is no definitive guidance on this matter, it is clear that present arrangements at NMBI are not effective and need to be reviewed.

**Recommendation 14:** The Department of Health should review the legislation governing NMBI, and consider a reduction in the size of the NMBI Board and a change to its make-up, including the means by which Board members are appointed. This matter should be subjected to consultation with relevant stakeholders.

**Recommendation 15:** The Department of Health should also consider the impact of the current Fitness to Practise workload on the governance of NMBI, particularly in respect of the inordinate volume of Fitness to Practise work involving Board members, and should assess whether legislative changes are required in order to make this process more efficient.

## 9. Strategy and Business Planning

***Establishment of an effective forward planning process.*** Significant work is required within NMBI in order to develop a clear vision for the organisation, and to create a compelling strategic plan for the next three years. This will be beneficial not just for NMBI itself, in terms of establishing a clear direction and forward plan, but also for restoring confidence with the nursing and midwifery profession.

**Recommendation 16:** NMBI should develop a new strategic plan by the end of the first quarter in 2016, covering the three-year period from 2016 to 2018. This should set out the mission, vision and values of NMBI, its strategic priorities over the three-year period, and the strategic initiatives which it wishes to pursue within that timeframe. Measurable key performance indicators must be included. Given the nature of the recommendations presented within this document, the new strategic plan will also represent a roadmap for reform within the organisation. Comprehensive engagement with external stakeholders should be included within this process. The strategic plan should be formally approved by the NMBI Board and submitted to the Department of Health/Minister. The Board should require its CEO to report on how the implementation process is progressing, including the achievement of targets.

**Recommendation 17:** NMBI should also publish an annual service plan or business plan, providing more detail on specified performance indicators, targets, resources, budget forecasts and other operational matters.

**Recommendation 18:** NMBI should report performance against the targets set out within its strategic plan and annual service plan within its published annual report.

## 10. A Forward Action Plan for NMBI

Given the nature of the recommendations set out above, establishing an immediate action plan for NMBI at this stage involves a small number of very urgent decisions and actions by NMBI and by the Department of Health:

- Acceptance of all of the recommendations contained in this document and agreement to move forward to immediate implementation;
- Appointment of an experienced leader for the reform process without delay. Given the recent turnover at senior management level, and the impending changes to the Presidency and the Board, it is imperative that a leader for the reform process should be put into position within the next one to two weeks;
- In parallel, urgent work needs to be undertaken with regard to the submission of business case as requested by the Department of Health – this work also needs to be executed immediately;
- A more detailed implementation plan for the reforms recommended in this document needs to be assembled and agreed by the NMBI Board and the Department of Health before the end of the year;
- The recommendations arising from this review, and the decisions following their consideration by the NMBI Board and the Department of Health, should be



communicated to members of staff within NMBI and to the wider stakeholder community, including members of the nursing and midwifery profession. The critical message here must be that this independent review has identified a range of issues to be resolved within NMBI, that both NMBI and the Department of Health have accepted that substantial reform must occur, and that a two-year process is now under way with the support of the Department to resolve these matters and to ensure that a new, stronger, fit for purpose Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland emerges by the end of this period.