

The Nursing and Midwifery Council's response to the consultation on the Reform of Adult Social Care in Northern Ireland

The NMC and social care

- 1 Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the [Consultation on the Reform of Adult Social Care](#) in Northern Ireland. We support the six overarching strategic priorities of the consultation and in our response, we focus on our role as a regulator, the professionals that we regulate and how we can work together to enhance social care in Northern Ireland.
- 2 The professionals on our register are pivotal to the success of delivering these proposals as they plan, commission, and deliver adult social care. Nurses ensure the quality of seamless care, and are key to prevention of ill health through identifying opportunities for early intervention; helping people exercise choice, and to make decisions on their own health, wherever possible. They provide leadership in the delivery of [person-centred care](#), caring for people wherever they are, and working effectively with other professionals.

Strategic Priority 1: Sustainable System building

- 3 We support the introduction of legislation to provide a cohesive legislative basis for adult social care in Northern Ireland and we would welcome opportunities to engage with the Department of Health to understand the implications for our regulatory role and the regulatory system in Northern Ireland.
- 4 We know that there are enormous pressures on the social care workforce. It must be clear how regional and whole system approaches to social care workforce planning will enable the professionals on our register to deliver integrated care. Including nurses in workforce planning will support a whole systems approach, and we can share our insight to inform this.

Strategic Priority 2: Valuing the Workforce

- 5 We are pleased to see plans to promote social care as a career choice, and we want to see social care nursing receive the recognition and support it deserves. We encourage people to work across diverse settings through our [education standards](#), and these high standards apply wherever our professionals work. We are advancing new standards for community and public health nursing, with our new [post-registration standards](#) for specialised care for people at home, and in the community.

- 6 Our [revalidation](#) requirements help professionals to keep up-to-date with their skills and knowledge, as they work in the context of continuing change in models of care delivery, demographic and population needs, technology and innovation. [Professional development](#) improves well-being and reduces staff turnover, making it really important that employers support revalidation for those working in adult social care.
- 7 We would welcome an annual social care workforce analysis report and, and we have useful data with our [data reports](#), we can share to support this. Including healthcare professionals in the workforce analysis and model, helps to integrate health and social care more smoothly.
- 8 We would be interested in a model to identify safe staffing levels in social care settings. We already work with organisations to share intelligence to ensure high quality care, for example, we have a [memorandum of understanding](#) with the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, to identify concerns and share information, to help keep people safe.
- 9 We support employers in Northern Ireland via our [Employer Link Service](#), sharing best practice and encouraging employers to take action locally, where possible, where concerns are raised, unless it affects keeping people safe.
- 10 We are keen to engage with any proposals for all staff working in social care settings to be registered with a professional body, to identify how this might work with our own regulatory role.

Strategic Priority 3: Individual Choice and Control

- 11 [Person-centred care](#) is central to what nurses do, and we promote this through our [Code](#) and the [standards](#) that we have for professionals on our register. Nurses have expertise to contribute to a regional strategic co-produced action plan to encourage people to have individual choice and control, and they often act as advocates for people receiving care and their families.
- 12 We look forward to learning more about plans for technology and what the impact might be for professionals on our register, who must demonstrate the digital and technological skills to meet the needs of people in their care, and effectively and responsibly use a range of digital technologies.

Strategic Priority 4: Prevention and Early Intervention

- 13 Nurses have a crucial role in early intervention and prevention, and ensuring the quality of seamless care for people. As we mention above they are actively involved in preventing ill-health which means they can make a significant contribution to the new Primary Care Multi-Disciplinary Teams.
- 14 The same is true of community care. The proposed Community Navigator role is designed as an integrated model and professionals on our register will be key to

the success of this as well as to the introduction of preventative and support visits for people aged over 75.

- 15 We have recently agreed new [post-registration standards](#) for community and public health nursing. These new standards are designed to enhance the support for people and communities. They clearly define the additional knowledge and skills that nurses need to provide specialist care and support for people in their own homes and communities, and on the influence that specialist nursing can have on the health of populations, with specialist community public health nurses (SCPHNs) and community nursing specialist practice qualifications (SPQs).

Strategic Priority 5: Supporting Carers

- 16 We support a new strategic approach to increase the support to carers, and we encourage the Department to make clear how informal care, and the Carers' Champion will interact with professionals in health and social care, and regulators such as ourselves, to further this ambition.
- 17 Alongside this we also recommend encouraging employers to seek a greater understanding of the caring responsibilities of health and care professionals, and provide support for those with caring responsibilities.

Strategic Priority 6: Primacy of Home

- 18 We welcome plans to improve the quality of care planning, co-ordination and integration. People receiving care should be at the heart of decision-making, and they should receive care where it suits them best.
- 19 Our [standards](#) require nurses to consider the best approach for each individual person, when planning and managing care, to ensure safe discharge of people from hospital to home or moving people between care settings.
- 20 Finally and importantly, we advocate for a named professional lead in a nursing care home to lead and make decisions to enable people to receive high-quality person-centred care, and this distinct role remains crucial.

About us

- 21 We are the UK's independent, statutory regulator of nursing and midwifery professions. We regulate [758,303](#) nursing and midwifery professionals, [including 26,854](#) nurses and midwives in Northern Ireland. Our purpose is to promote and uphold the highest professional standards in order to protect the public and inspire confidence in the professions.
- 22 Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. Our core role is to **regulate**. To regulate well, we **support** our professionals and the public. Regulating and supporting our professionals allows us to **influence** health and social care.