



NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

QUALITY 2020 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

APRIL 2017 – MARCH 2018

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FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Northern Ireland Social Care Council's (NISCC) Annual Quality 2020 Report for 2017/18. This is the fifth Report produced by NISCC and sets out the many achievements delivered by NISCC as it seeks to ensure quality is embedded throughout all aspects of the organisation.

As the regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland, NISCC is responsible for promoting high quality standards of workforce training and practice.

I am delighted to reflect on the many achievements of NISCC over the last year, most notably rolling out registration to the Domiciliary and Day Care Workforces. At the end of March 2018, we had almost 40,000 people working in the social care sector in Northern Ireland who were registered with NISCC

We have continued to make significant progress with our Quality Agenda; in particular achieving IIP Silver Status accreditation and being the first public sector employer in Northern Ireland to also achieve the IIP Health and Wellbeing reward. These are major achievements for our workforce recognising their commitment to delivering high quality services to NISCC registrants and our wide range of stakeholders.

As part of this work, we established a number of active working groups to look at key areas of service delivery and improvement, one of which is a Quality Improvement Group which is comprised of a number of staff from across functions and job roles. The work of this Group is at an early stage and it has already agreed a programme of work to deliver over the next three years (2018/19 – 2020/21).

We have also commenced engagement with our staff to review our team values and behaviours to ensure these are meaningful, evidenced and will support us to improve both the internal experience of the workforce, and also the delivery of services to our registrants and stakeholders.

Alongside our work to roll out registration to the Domiciliary and Day Care Workforce, we have been busy developing a new ICT Regulation and Registration system which will underpin our service delivery and will enable us to further modernise our services and respond to feedback from our registrants on the current system.

We delivered our first annual Business Plan arising out of our Corporate Plan for 2017/18 – 2020/21, which has a focus on leadership and the impact of leadership on quality outcomes.

As part of this work, all our staff attended training on Collective Leadership to enable them to better understand how we are all leaders and what that means to the organisation and the services we deliver.

In listening to feedback from our stakeholders, we held a Social Care Matters symposium during the year which was well attended across the sector, and identified a range of issues which we will engage on through a systems leadership approach. In addition, we produced an Easy Read version of the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice as part of our ongoing commitment to put standards at the heart of our work and of social work and social care practice.

All NISCC staff have a role to play in delivering high quality standards of service and this is measured in NISCC's annual appraisal system which includes the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) of which quality is a core requirement.

We set out the various ways in which we have delivered quality improvement in our business throughout this Report which are detailed under the following headings –

- Transforming the Culture;
- Strengthening the Workforce;
- Measuring the Improvement;
- Raising the Standards;
- Integrating with Care.

As in previous years' Annual Quality Reports, we have also added an action plan for 2018/19 to help us measure and report on our improvement plan.

We welcome feedback on this Report and our services generally, to help us ensure we are doing the right things in the right way to provide high quality services to all our customers and stakeholders.



PATRICIA HIGGINS
INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

When Quality 2020 was published by the then Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2011, it set out a ten year strategy with the guiding principle to protect and improve the quality of services delivered in health and social care. We are now well along that pathway with this year being the seventh year of that strategy. Demonstrable progress has been made in the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) to support this Strategy over that time, and

The Strategy identified five strategic goals which are set out in this Report, namely –

- Transforming the Culture;
- Strengthening the Workforce;
- Measuring the Improvement;
- Raising the Standards;
- Integrating with Care.

The extent to which the Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) has delivered against each of these themes is detailed throughout this Annual Report.

NISCC is a non-Departmental Public Body sponsored by the Department of Health, (DoH). It is the regulatory body for the social care workforce in Northern Ireland. Its role is to regulate and register social workers, social care workers and those studying for the Degree in Social Work. It also supports professional development across the workforce.

NISCC's aim is to:

‘Protect the public through improving safeguards for vulnerable people, raising the standards of social care practice and strengthening the professionalism of the workforce’

To achieve this NISCC –

- Sets standards of practice for social care workers and their employers to promote a safe, reliable and competent workforce;
- Registers the social care workforce to assure the public that a social care worker registered with NISCC will be viewed as safe and competent to practice;
- Regulates social work training to ensure it prepares staff to do the job expected of them;

- Promotes education and training for all social care staff;
- Works with service users, carers, registrants and other stakeholders in developing and delivering NISCC's business.

NISCC delivers its work programme aligned to five strategic themes –

- **Standards** – Putting Standards at the heart of social work and social care practice and education and training;
- **Regulation** – Regulate the Workforce and Social Work Education and Training;
- **Workforce Development** – Develop the Social Work and Social Care Workforce;
- **Systems Leadership** – Promote a Systems Leadership Approach across the Social Care Sector; and
- **Communications and Engagement** – Communicate, Connect and Engage.

Social workers, social care managers in residential, day care and domiciliary care settings, social care workers in residential care for adults, and social work students (undertaking the Degree in Social Work in NI) were included in the first stages of compulsory registration and required to register with the NISCC.

During 2017/18, NISCC continued to implement the Minister of Health's decision to extend this compulsory registration to include social care workers in domiciliary care, day care and supported living settings. NISCC was the first regulator in the UK to regulate this workforce.

This roll out of registration represented a significant objective for NISCC, increasing the size of its register to almost 40,000 registrants – an outstanding increase of just over 60% since 2016.

39859 NISCC
Registrants at
31/03/2018

33,111
Social care workers
6048
Social workers

700
Social work students

As at 31 March 2018, there were 39,859 social care workers registered with NISCC.

TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE

Q2020 states: “We will make achieving high quality the top priority at all levels in health and social care. We will promote and encourage partnerships between staff, patients, clients and carers to support decision making.”

This means creating a new and dynamic culture that is even more willing to embrace change, innovation and new thinking that can contribute to a safer and more effective service. It will require strong leadership, widespread involvement and partnership-working by everyone.

TRANSFORMING THE CULTURE IN NISCC

NISCC's services are delivered primarily to the social care workforce (social workers, social care workers, and those studying for the Degree in Social Work). In addition, NISCC works with and supports a range of partners and stakeholders, including employers in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, universities and colleges, commissioners, regulators and service users and carers.

NISCC has strived to ensure quality improvement is at the heart of its business and is not seen as an 'add on' or initiative that sits outside what we do and how we operate. For this reason NISCC's quality agenda sits across multiple levels of reporting and business operations which is explained below –

Leadership

NISCC is organised into two Directorates, each headed by a Director who is also a member of NISCC's Senior Management Team – the Director of Registration and Corporate Services, and the Director of Regulation and Standards. ***An organisational structure for NISCC is attached at Annex A.***

The Registration and Corporate Services Directorate is responsible for the registration of the social care workforce, and a number of corporate service functions including Database Development, Finance, HR, Procurement, Administration, and Committee Management.

The Regulation and Standards Directorate is responsible for the regulation of the social care workforce including investigating allegations relating to a registered worker's fitness to practise. The Directorate is also responsible for setting the Standards of Conduct and Practice for the workforce, setting the standards for and regulating social work education and training, and ensuring appropriate qualifications and training frameworks are in place to support the continuous development of both the social work and social care workforce.

NISCC accounts for its performance against quality standards in monthly Business Performance Reports to the Senior Management Team, and to NISCC's Council in quarterly Business Performance Reports. Both types of reports detail how NISCC has been delivering its business, identifies areas of concern and enables SMT and/or Council to challenge assurances and make policy decisions. During the year, NISCC developed an Evaluation

Framework to detail how it would ensure the outcomes and impacts detailed in its Corporate and Business Plans would be realised.

NISCC Council is responsible for providing the strategic direction for NISCC including approving its Corporate and Business Plans in which NISCC's commitment to quality improvement is clearly set out. In 2017/18, NISCC published its new Corporate Plan following a period of consultation in the previous year with service users, carers, registrants, employers and education providers. The consultation told NISCC what their priorities were for NISCC and these were themed around five key areas –

- **Standards** – NISCC should put standards at the heart of social work and social care practice and education and training, to support the delivery of effective social care services both now and in the future;
- **Regulation** – NISCC should ensure regulation is robust agile, valued and trusted, to support good social work care practice;
- **Workforce Development** – NISCC should support the development of the social work and social care workforce to enable them to deliver safe, effective and value led care;
- **Leadership** – NISCC should promote a systems leadership approach to contribute to capacity building that will support leadership at all levels;
- **Communication and Engagement** – NISCC should ensure there is effective and meaningful communication and engagement, to improve the understanding of what NISCC does and the value of the social work and social care workforce.

NISCC's Chief Executive and SMT continue to set the quality agenda for NISCC including ensuring NISCC has Key Performance Indicators in place that measure not only business volumes, but also quality standards and impact/outcomes. NISCC continues to review these KPI's to ensure they are meaningful, measurable and inform business design and planning in an effective way.

Securing Involvement

NISCC has continued to ensure that it plans, delivers and assesses its business based on feedback, involvement and participation at all levels – including from registrants, service users and carers, staff and other stakeholders.

Examples of securing involvement in relation to staff during 2017/18 include –

- CEO/SMT meetings with all staff to discuss a range of business matters;
- All staff engagement events to review progress against key corporate objectives;
- CEO/SMT meetings with all staff to congratulate staff's efforts including staff's commitment to promoting online services and delivering team projects.

- SMT notifications to staff on reaching particular team goals including reaching the peak thresholds on the number of people being registered with NISCC;
- Monthly team meetings take place across all teams in NISCC where all team members can discuss projects which went well and those which have been a challenge;
- Registration statistics are shared openly in the office, with staff and team members working fluidly between teams and ensuring resources are continually placed where the pressure most demands it.

NISCC has a 'no blame' culture and as part of this, continual learning and training around near miss and data breaches are discussed with relevant staff, procedures amended and improved if possible and learning taken forward from these issues. In addition, all managers encourage an open and honest dialogue with their teams to ensure staff feel they can raise issues.

Looking beyond internal engagement and culture, NISCC also secures the involvement of registrants and others in the course of its business. For example, during 2017/18 NISCC –

- Sought feedback from registrants through surveys and other online means on a regular basis and shared with NISCC's Senior Management Team on a monthly basis;
- Received reports on feedback and complaints on NISCC's staff and services which were shared with NISCC's Senior Management Team (monthly) and with NISCC Council (quarterly) including an explanation of what has been learnt/improved as a result of the feedback;
- Actively sought feedback from participants at each of the events/conferences/information sessions hosted by NISCC. This feedback informs the delivery and planning of future events.

Values, Behaviours and Culture

As part of NISCC's commitment to improve its culture for all staff, a series of workshops have been held across teams to openly review the culture of those teams and the organisation. The workshops have identified a range of positive behaviours necessary to support the team and corporate values. This work will continue during 2018/19 and a Culture Improvement Group has also been established to manage this work alongside other initiatives to improve the culture across the organisation as a whole.

Engagement

NISCC has a strong track record of engaging with its workforce but also in terms of engaging its registrants, stakeholders, service users and carers, and employers. Examples of this include –

- NISCC led an extensive range of engagement to deliver on our objectives to develop the workforce and the training needed to further their skills and knowledge. As part of this, NISCC completed a detailed review of the Level 4 qualifications for social care which involved lengthy consultations with employers and education providers to ensure the qualification meets the needs of the workforce.
- Development of the NISCC Social Care Managers continued in 2017-18 with four Managers Forum events and two events for Registered Managers held across Northern Ireland. 500 managers took part in the events to discuss registration and practice issues. 94% said that it helped improve their practice.
- Lunchtime seminars for social workers and social care workers also continued to prove popular, with a wide range of themes including Adult Slavery. These seminars provided an opportunity for registrants to share their learning and practice with their colleagues.
- NISCC also contributed insight on the social work and social care workforce towards strategic reviews for the sector. NISCC senior staff fulfilled roles in the workstreams being undertaken by the Department of Health to take forward the recommendations in the review of Adult Social Care.
- NISCC have also helped to establish a Social Work leadership network for the profession across Northern Ireland and contributed to the development of the HSC Workforce strategy as part of the transformation agenda put forward in 'Delivering Together'.

The way in which NISCC structures its engagement with others is through partnership arrangements which are described in the section below.

Partnership Working

NISCC has four partnerships in place which supports its business, namely –

- Participation Partnership
- Registrants' Forum
- Workforce Development Partnership
- Professional in Practice Partnership

Participation Partnership

One of the ways in which NISCC oversees its engagement with service users and carers is through its Participation Partnership which is chaired by a Member of Council and comprises a number of service users and carers with wide experience of the social care system in Northern Ireland. The Participation Partnership oversees the quality and quantity of engagement and challenges the way in which NISCC designs and delivers its business, ensuring it is people focused and impactful.

The Participation Partnership has been instrumental during the year in overseeing the quality and quantity of engagement by NISCC, including –

- Helping to develop and promote Easy Read versions of the Standards of Conduct and Practice. The Participation Partnership also worked with the Registrants Forum to develop the 'What I Need from my Social Care Worker' leaflet which will be used to help explain the standards expected of registered workers;
- Two members participated in judging panels for the 2018 Social Work Awards; a key event that celebrates the best of social work;
- Members of the Participation Partnership also participated in interview panels for new Fitness to Practise Committee Members;
- Participation Partnership members also contributed to development of GAIN guidance for social care managers;
- Alongside service users from supported housing and residential care, the Participation Partnership featured in a video presentation to promote 'Social Care Matters' at the December 2017 symposium to raise awareness of the contribution of social care to the community and economy in Northern Ireland
- The members of the Participation Partnership have taken an active role in the Regional Personal Public Involvement Forum. One member has also attended a number of external meetings with NISCC staff members to help improve understanding of the NISCC role in improving standards for the workforce.

Registrants' Forum

NISCC's register at the end of March 2018 includes over 39,000 registrants across Northern Ireland. To co-ordinate engagement with this group, NISCC supports a Registrants' Forum, chaired by a registrant and comprising representatives from each part of the register. The Registrants' Forum provides a vehicle through which the views of registrants can be properly and adequately represented.

Workforce Development Partnership

NISCC supports a Workforce Development Partnership which is chaired by a Member of Council and consists of employers who employ social care workers across Northern Ireland. It provides a strategic leadership role to support social care workforce policy development and works with NISCC to identify the skill needs of the social care workforce and learning and development strategies to meet these needs.

Professional in Practice Partnership

NISCC supports a Professional in Practice Partnership which is chaired by a Council Member and comprises employers and Higher Education Institutions who are key to successfully supporting the delivery of the Professional in Practice framework for social workers. This enables NISCC to ensure that the arrangements for supporting the professional practice of social workers remain fit for purpose and meaningful for those who extend their development using this route.

Each of these Partnerships provides a structured means through which NISCC can engage successfully with its stakeholders and review the quality of the service it provides. During 2017/18 each of these Partnerships have, where relevant, informed the work of NISCC, provided feedback on draft policies and plans, informed the culture of NISCC (particularly in relation to communications and the language used to engage with the social care workforce, service users and carers), and contributed to a more effective service through the challenge and assurance function they provide.

STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE

Q2020 states: “We will provide the right education, training and support to deliver high quality service. We will develop leadership skills at all levels and empower staff to take decisions and make changes.”

The people who work in health and social care (including volunteers and carers) are its greatest asset. It is vital therefore that every effort is made to equip them with the skills and knowledge they will require, building on existing and emerging HR strategies, to deliver the highest quality.

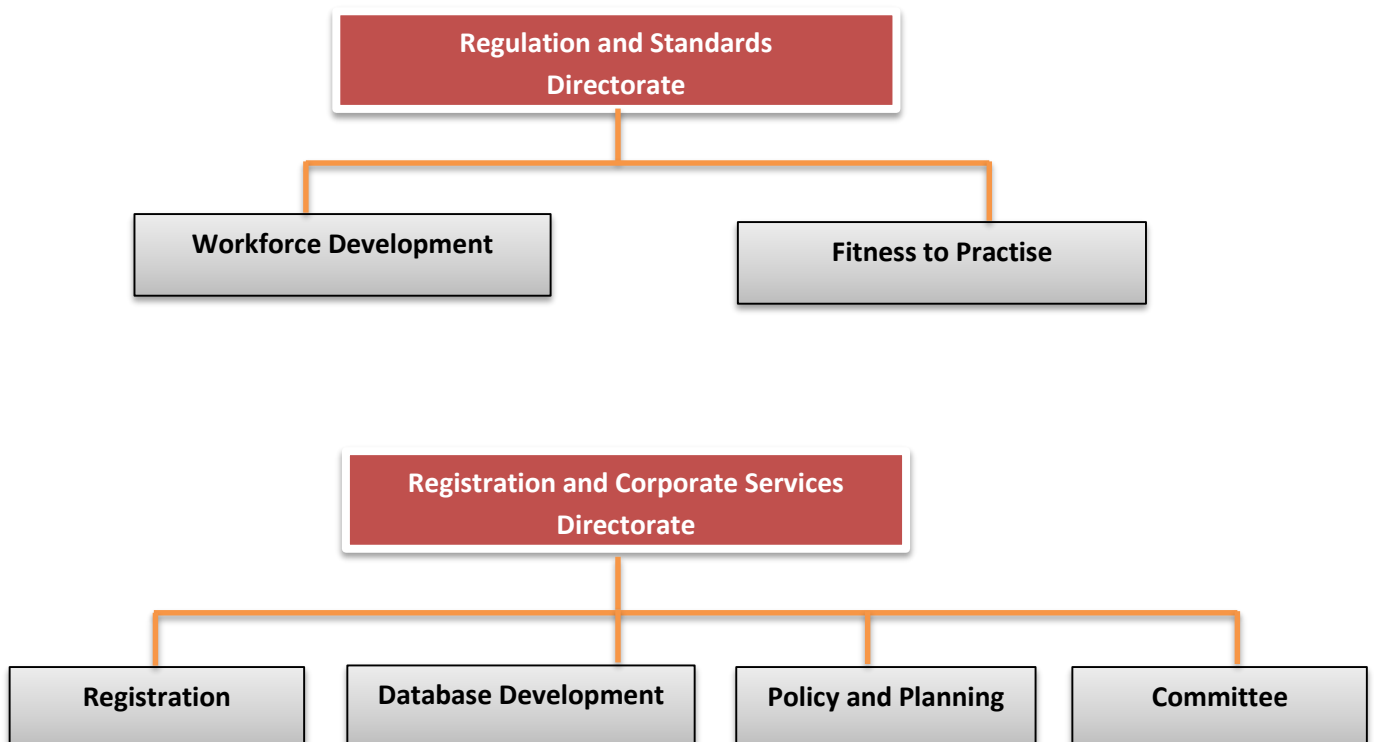
STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE IN NISCC

NISCC has a staffing complement of 63 staff at end March 2018, (25% of whom work part time) and which comprises –

- Administrative Staff – often providing front line services;
- Managers – including team leaders and heads of function;
- Professional Advisers – professionally qualified social workers;
- Directors – who form part of NISCC’s Senior Management Team.

NISCC staff work using a variety of working patterns including full-time, part-time, job-share and compressed hours. They can also avail of flexi time, special leave (including carers leave), career breaks and unpaid leave.

Staff are assigned across two Directorates as demonstrated below –



The Communications Team, report directly to the Chief Executive, to ensure communications and engagement is at the heart of every aspect of delivering quality services across NISCC.

Appraising, Learning and Developing

NISCC promotes a learning culture across all aspects of the organisation, including empowering individuals to take control of their own development and career management. In support of this all staff are required to have a set of SMART¹ objectives in place which reflect an individual's/team's contribution to NISCC's Corporate Plan, Business Plan, Operational Plan and Key Performance Indicators and Standards. Performance against objectives are reviewed twice a year – a mid-year review in October and an end year review in April. Through this process, individuals and managers can be assured of their contribution to the organisation's objectives and their learning and development needs can be assessed.

In 2017/18, 97% of staff had an annual performance appraisal and a learning and development plan agreed by end April 2018.

Learning and Development Plans for all staff in NISCC are reviewed to identify team training needs, essential and developmental needs, and professional learning. This work is carried out by the NISCC's Operational Management Team (OMT) which comprises each of the Head of Functions across all of the business areas in NISCC (Fitness to Practise, Workforce Development, Corporate, Committee, Communications, Registration, and Database teams). OMT develop and review a Training Needs Analysis and Learning Programme which is costed and prioritised to take account of equality of opportunity, business need and individual/team development.

NISCC implemented a number of initiatives to enhance the learning and development of its staff during 2017/18. This included –

- Collective Leadership awareness for all staff;
- Introduction to Coaching for all staff;
- E-learning module on Q2020 for all staff;
- Thematic Information Sessions for all staff on Supporting People with Cancer, and also on Learning Difficulties;
- Information sessions for staff on a number of business functional areas, including the new model of regulation Post Registration Training and Learning;
- Senior Management Team Briefings on a range of issues including updates on key projects, financial planning and new areas of work;
- Multi-team working on various projects to share and exchange knowledge and information and enhance the overall work experience.

Knowledge and Skills Framework

For the last number of years, NISCC has implemented the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) as part of its annual performance appraisal and learning and development system for

¹ SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound

all staff. The KSF includes six core dimensions against which all posts were assessed and each member of staff is expected to deliver.

One of the core dimensions is delivering and demonstrating Quality in the Workplace. NISCC has defined this for staff as

“...maintaining high quality in all areas of work and practice, including the important aspects of effective team working.”

Staff are required to demonstrate this throughout the year using the following typical positive indicators of providing a good quality service –

- People are confident in asking for support where necessary and feel well supported;
- People respond positively when colleagues ask for help and support;
- People feel encouraged to report errors and near misses;
- When errors and quality issues occur, the focus is on resolving the issue and learning from it;
- There is a ‘no-blame’ culture;
- Resources are used effectively;
- People adapt to changing priorities and changing quality systems; and
- High quality services are delivered and improving.

The system has worked well and is part of how NISCC embeds quality throughout all aspects of its business by holding each other to account for individual and team contributions to the overall quality agenda for NISCC. 97% of staff had an appraisal completed during 2017/18 against this framework.

Investors in People (IIP)

NISCC achieved IIP Silver accreditation status in March 2018 under the new 6th Generation IIP model. This was a significant achievement and is part of NISCC’s ongoing improvement agenda in the way it invests in its workforce.



In addition, NISCC was the first public sector organisation to be awarded IIP’s Health and Wellbeing Award in recognition of its work to support and improve health and wellbeing for all staff.

NISCC has actively used the IIP Framework to inform its People Strategies in support of its core business by evaluating key components of the Framework which are relevant to its business. For example, by reviewing effective leadership, delivering and embracing organisational change, putting in place quality and continuous improvement, and demonstrating innovative practice.

To deliver the report arising from the IIP assessment, NISCC has created five oversight groups; each charged with reviewing key areas of work and identifying actions to improve the experience and impact of these areas. The oversight groups are reflective of all of the

functions in NISCC and are – Culture, Quality, Performance, Communication and Making Connections.

NISCC developed an action plan to ensure it delivers on the recommendations arising from the IIP assessment (see below).

Recognising Good Performance

NISCC appreciates the importance of taking time to recognise and acknowledge good performance whether that is on an individual basis, as a team, or for the organisation as a whole. Feedback from IIP Reports indicate that NISCC managers are well equipped and skilled on giving direct feedback, in a positive and constructive way, while also acknowledging excellent work that stands out whether as a result of an individual/teams commitment, or as a result of the challenge the work presented in the first instance.

This type of feedback manifests itself on a day to day basis, through one to one meetings and through mid-year and end-year performance appraisal reviews. At the same time, the Senior Management Team and Council take the time to email and/or meet staff to personally acknowledge the success of a team/teams and of the organisation.

During 2017/18, examples of this include –

- SMT/Council organised and funded an all staff event to acknowledge the hard work of all teams in delivering a wide number of challenging work programmes during the year;
- SMT emails out to staff throughout the year at key points acknowledging work of staff in delivering the roll-out of registration to the extended social care workforce, organising large social work/social care events, and reviewing the processes, systems and structures in the registration function;
- Staff events to inform the development of the new Business Plan;
- Health and wellbeing initiatives to promote health in the workplace and at home.

This all inclusive approach to one to one feedback through to SMT and Council providing feedback and acknowledging good performance is part of NISCC's culture of working collectively towards a common purpose and outcome.

Providing an interactive culture which provides time for staff to connect in this way is also underpinned by the SMT's commitment to supporting NISCC's Events Committee. The Events Committee organised a number of functions throughout the year including a staff barbeque where individuals and teams had an opportunity to interact, occasionally with teams whom they might not normally have an opportunity to engage with on a day to day basis.

In addition to these 'staff events', the Events Committee also takes an active role in organising and supporting a number of charities throughout the year.

During 2017/18, the Events Committee organised and supported –

- An awareness session over tea/coffee on supporting cancer awareness;
- Autism awareness day – ‘Wear it Blue’;
- Health and Wellbeing promotion;
- Marie Curie ‘Shop Challenge’;
- Synergy project sessions to increase awareness of social care in the voluntary sector.

Values and Behaviours

NISCC’s new Corporate Plan identified four corporate values for the organisation –

- **Excellence** – we are committed to excellence in everything we do;
- **Respect** – we respect the rights, dignity and inherent worth of individuals;
- **Integrity** – we are honest and work in an open and transparent way;
- **Partnership** – we are a listening and learning organisation. Working in partnership to ensure what we do makes a difference.

As indicated earlier, NISCC is also working on refreshing the team values and behaviours for the organisation which will be taken forward during 2018/19.

NISCC is using a number of opportunities to embed and promote its values, including ensuring they are reflected in policies and strategies, and in recruitment and job descriptions.

Senior Management Commitment to Quality

Ensuring a quality agenda and culture exists, and can be evidenced throughout NISCC, starts at the top level of the organisation and is led by the senior management structure.

NISCC’s Senior Management Team ensure quality and evidence of quality (business reports, feedback reports, evaluation) is part of their regular agenda. At the same time, and to cascade this approach, the Senior Management Team put in place an Operational Management Team which comprises the heads of function from each of the areas across NISCC (Fitness to Practise, Workforce Development, Corporate, Committee, Communications, Registration and Database). The Operational Management Team meet monthly and report to the Senior Management Team; not only on the day to day business (delivery, outcomes, risks), but also issues in relation to quality, service improvement, culture, and learning and development.

As part of this work, the Operational Management Team required all staff to complete the e-learning module on Q2020 Attributes Framework level 1, which was achieved. The module now also forms part of the induction programme for all new staff appointed to NISCC.

MEASURING THE IMPROVEMENT

Q2020 states: “We will improve outcome measurement and report on progress for safety effectiveness and the patient/client experience. We will promote the use of accredited improvement techniques and ensure that there is sufficient capacity and capability within the HSC to use them effectively.”

The delivery of continuous improvement lies at the heart of any system that aspires to excellence, particularly in the rapidly changing world of health and social care. In order to confirm that improvement is taking place we will need more reliable and accurate means to measure, value and report on quality improvement and outcomes.

MEASURING THE IMPROVEMENT IN NISCC

NISCC understands the need to have robust and reliable information to hand to help inform whether it is doing things well – or well enough. To support this NISCC has a number of reporting and feedback mechanisms in place which include –

- Annual business objectives which are reported to Council/SMT on a quarterly basis;
- Monthly business reporting to SMT;
- Key Performance Indicators and Quality Standards;
- Internal Audit Reviews and compliance reports;
- Data Quality Reports;
- Surveys, reviews and evaluations;
- Customer Feedback Reports;
- Complaints Management and Learning Reports;
- Robust Registration database and reporting.

Staff at all levels are encouraged to challenge processes that are no longer effective. As an example, a number of registration procedures have been improved such as enabling registrants to advise NISCC of changes of contact details and employment over the phone, rather than asking registrants to put their request in writing. This has improved the customer service experience for registrants who can get certain issues resolved quickly in a way that best suits them.

Teams also meet on a monthly basis to review their own performance and suggest ways in which work can be streamlined and improved to the direct benefit of those people we provide a service to.

All of these arrangements do not however operate in isolation; instead they are open to challenge, review and compliance assurance. This includes reviews by Internal Audit to provide relevant assurance, and oversight by NISCC’s Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.

Quality Improvement in Service Delivery

During 2017/18, NISCC delivered the following –

- Changing the way in which risks are managed and reported on in the organisation, making this more meaningful and transparent;
- Created a flexible and modern experience for our ‘front of house’, through the Customer Service Team to improve the user experience when engaging with NISCC.
- Established a number of improvement oversight groups –
 - Culture Improvement Group;
 - Quality Improvement Group;
 - Performance Improvement Group;
 - Communications Improvement Group;
 - Making Connections Improvement Group.

Managing Complaints and Feedback

It is important for any organisation to provide a clear mechanism for dispute resolution, particularly if an individual is concerned about the service they have received, how they were treated by a member of staff or the systems/processes which are in place in NISCC’s business.

NISCC encourages its staff that wherever possible, complaints or disputes are managed locally and at source where an immediate resolution can resolve concerns, and reduce the stress or anxiety caused to the individual. NISCC also recognises that, at times, having a mechanism (through NISCC’s Complaints Policy) provides a means through which a complaint can be independently reviewed and investigated. NISCC’s Complaints Policy encourages individuals to raise their complaint with NISCC’s Complaints Officer, and if the individual still remains unsatisfied with their response they may elevate their complaint to the Director of Registration and Corporate Services, and ultimately the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

The purpose of all of this is to ensure that NISCC listens and responds to concerns, and where necessary puts improvements in place, regardless of whether these are on a small or larger scale.

NISCC also reviewed its Complaints Policy, taking into account good practice guidance and tried to make its Policy more accessible and relevant to the reader. While the overarching principles of the Policy did not change, how it was set out and the processes which support it were enhanced.

RAISING THE STANDARDS

Q2020 states: “We will establish a framework of a clear evidence-based standards and best practice guidance. We will establish dynamic partnerships between service users, commissioners and providers to develop, monitor and review.”

The service requires a coherent framework of robust and meaningful standards against which performance can be assessed. These already exist in some parts, but much more needs to be done, particularly involving service users, carers and families in the development, monitoring and reviewing of standards.

RAISING THE STANDARDS IN NISCC

NISCC has a sound history of developing and implementing standards in social care. This was evidenced in NISCC’s original ‘Codes of Practice’. The Codes were reviewed and ‘Standards of Conduct and Practice for Social Workers and Social Care Workers’ were launched in 2015, followed by Easy Read versions in 2017/18. In addition revised Standards for Social Care Employers were also launched.

NISCC worked with registrants and employers during 2017/18 to ensure the Standards were embedded and understood across the sector. This is part of an ongoing programme of work to ensure the Standards are at the heart of social care practice.

The Standards of Conduct and Practice explain the standards expected of the social care workforce in Northern Ireland. They set out very clearly what is expected in terms of an individual worker’s conduct i.e. values, attitudes and behaviour as well as standards for their Practice which outline the knowledge and skills required for competent practice.

Professional in Practice Framework

NISCC’s Professional in Practice (PiP) Framework continues to make a positive impact on the professional development of social workers.



**PROFESSIONAL
in PRACTICE**
Continuous Professional
Development for Social Work

During 2017/18 –

- 262 used the online Credit Accumulation service
- 682 engaged in assessment within the PiP Framework
- 213 achieved PiP Awards

Engagement

NISCC continues to drive up standards through increased engagement for all levels of staff with stakeholders. For example:

All staff were invited to attend the external awareness sessions on the introduction of the new Standards for social work, social care and students, which gave staff further opportunity to engage with stakeholders.

NISCC staff also gave presentations to Social Work Students and Graduates in order to communicate and engage with them regarding their registration requirements. This face to face engagement with students from the time they start their social work course and then being the point of contact for them throughout their degree into their first year as a Qualified Social Worker, allows NISCC staff to build relationships with this group. It enables them to successfully promote NISCC requirements and establish NISCC as a personable and approachable regulator.

As alluded to in earlier sections of this Report, NISCC has established a proactive Participation Partnership which oversees the quality and quantity of NISCC's engagement with service users and carers, and challenges NISCC on same. The Participation Partnership has played a vital role in the way and manner in which NISCC approaches the embedding of Standards across the social care sector. As part of this the Participation Partnership supported and oversaw the development of the Easy Read version of the NISCC Standards of Conduct and Practice as part of our ongoing commitment to put standards at the heart of our work and of social work and social care practice.

Raising the Standards in Council

Over the last four years, NISCC Council has carried out an annual Board Self-Assessment to benchmark its performance and governance against best practice and provide assurance that it is conducting its business in accordance with best practice.

NISCC Council carried out its annual self-assessment during 2017/18 to assess to what extent it was efficient in delivering high quality services. As a result of this the Council developed an action plan to raise its standards where it was deemed necessary. This included, for example, -

- Engagement with the Department on succession planning to ensure future vacancies at Council level were filled in a timely manner; and
- Formalised arrangements for learning and development for existing and new Council Members.

NISCC Council reviews progress against their action plan on a quarterly basis including carrying out a number of case studies at strategic sessions to examine in detail particular strategic challenges facing the organisation. As a result of this process, NISCC Council are able to review the extent to which they are raising standards in their own work to the benefit of the organisation and its stakeholders as a whole.

INTEGRATING THE CARE

Q2020 states: “We will develop integrated pathways of care for individuals. We will make better use of multidisciplinary team working and shared opportunities for learning and development in the HSC and with external providers.”

Northern Ireland offers excellent opportunities to provide fully integrated services because of the organisational structure that combines health and social care and the relatively small population that it serves. However, integrated care should cross all sectoral and professional boundaries to benefit patients, clients and families.

INTEGRATING THE CARE IN NISCC

NISCC is an organisation of the health and social care sector in Northern Ireland. While provided with a specific remit regarding the regulation and registration of the social care workforce, it carries out its functions in close working partnerships with others in the health and social care sector in Northern Ireland. This can span significant Ministerial agenda items such as Transforming Your Care and Quality 2020 to specific and targeted areas of work including Social Care Strategy and raising public awareness.

NISCC is represented on all relevant groups and committees and is active in contributing to and driving forward the agenda to the benefit of the social care workforce. It also integrates its work at a direct level with employers, Trusts, universities, the voluntary and community sectors, and service users and carers.

Each of NISCC’s Professional Advisers continue to support key strategic areas of engagement including the roll out of registration to the remainder of the social care workforce, embedding the Standards of Conduct and Practice, and promoting the Professional in Practice Framework.

Promoting Social Work and Social Care as Regulated Professions

During the year, NISCC worked with a wide range of stakeholders to raise awareness about workforce regulation and professional standards. NISCC staff presented the benefits of workforce regulation in raising care standards at conferences and seminars.

NISCC Ambassadors for Social Work and Careers in Care promoted social work and social care as positive career choices in schools, colleges and at employment events. During the year, Ambassador Visits and events were promoted on the NISCC website and shared on NISCC social media sites.

Participation, Engagement and Involvement

NISCC has been active in involving and engaging carers and those who use social care services in the development of its business. It has at its core a strategic objective to:

“Raise awareness and knowledge of the work of NISCC and ensure its work is informed and influenced by users of social care services, carers, registrants, employers and other stakeholders”

NISCC is also required to publish an Annual Report on how it engages service users and carers throughout the year. NISCC publishes this Report as part of its overarching Annual Report and Accounts under the heading ‘Personal and Public Involvement’ (PPI).

PPI has been instrumental in how the NISCC has delivered its business since its establishment in 2001, realising the impact and importance of involving those who benefit from or use the services being provided, in helping to develop, shape and challenge those services.

To co-ordinate this work NISCC established a Participation Partnership. The Participation Partnership is made up of service users and carers, and Council Members and is supported by NISCC staff. The Partnership considers a wide range of strategy and policy issues facing NISCC. The service users and carers, who are the core members of this group, use their contacts, experiences and views to shape and develop how NISCC designs and delivers its business. The Partnership also challenges and advises NISCC on all policies/strategies developed. NISCC must make clear how and to what extent service users and carers have been involved, and ultimately engaged. The Partnership’s founding principles are to Challenge, Influence and Advise.

To ensure the Participation Partnership continually stretch their scope and make a real contribution to outcomes, the Partnership developed a number of ‘Principles of Participation’ and Quality Standards including –

- ✓ Valuing leadership
- ✓ Promoting partnership working
- ✓ Effective communication
- ✓ Supporting meaningful involvement
- ✓ Continuous improvement; and
- ✓ Governance

The Director of Registration and Corporate Services supports the broader participation agenda and is the senior representative at NISCC’s Senior Management Team (SMT) with responsibility for ensuring that participation forms an effective and regular part of reporting to the SMT and to the Council.

NISCC QUALITY 2020

ACTION PLAN 2018/19

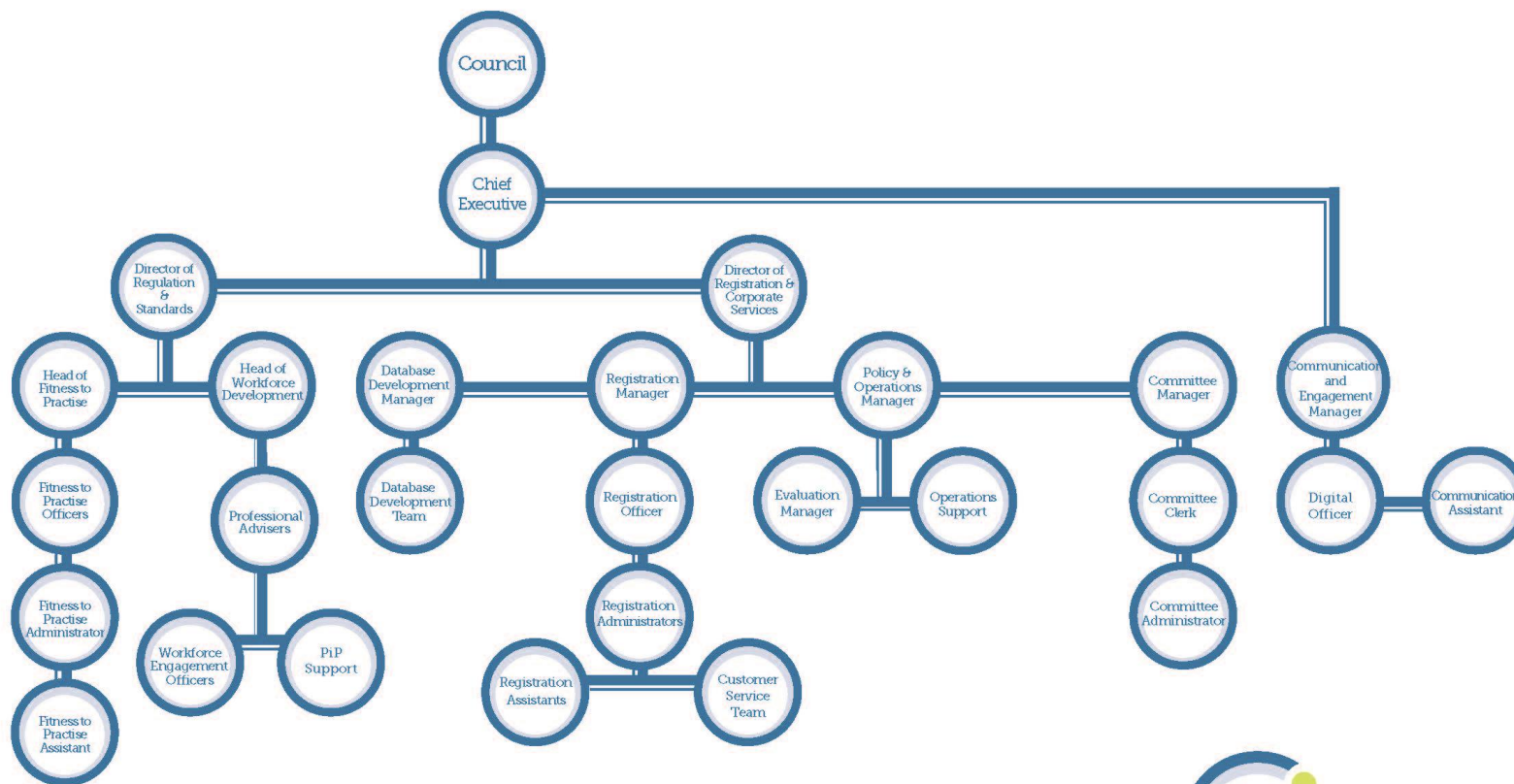
To inform NISCC's continued improvement in relation to embedding quality, demonstrating quality and measuring quality outcomes, NISCC has identified the following areas for delivering during 2018/19 –

ACTIVITY	HOW AND WHEN	DESIRED OUTCOME
1. We will produce an agreed definition of quality improvement for NISCC.	NISCC's Quality Oversight Group will lead including consultation. Draft by end 2018/19	Staff will have a clear definition of their own and organisational role on what quality improvement means.
2. We will use the Attributes Framework to benchmark staff's understanding of quality improvement and use this to make recommendations about further training and development needs in this area.	NISCC's Quality Oversight Group will lead including engagement with staff. Draft by end 2018/19	Gaps in knowledge about how to successfully implement quality improvement across all functions will be identified so that training can be sourced.
3. We will produce recommendations about to build a culture of quality improvement into the day to day work of NISCC.	NISCC's Quality Oversight Group, with support from NISCC's other oversight groups including NISCC's Culture Improvement Group will develop actions to embed quality improvement into the culture of NISCC. Draft by end 2018/19	Clear and measurable actions will be identified that can be delivered and evaluated during 2019/20.
4. We will gather information about the current quality improvement projects underway, to identify how to capture and promote Quality Improvement.	NISCC's Quality Oversight Group will lead. Outline paper developed by end 2018/19	NISCC will have an outline framework of all of the quality improvement work underway so that this is co-ordinated and impact can be measured.
5. We will Deliver a Training Plan that has a strong focus on leadership, team development, customer service provision and more in depth quality assessment training.	Policy and Operations Manager will develop a Training Needs Analysis and Plan that meets these needs by October 2018.	NISCC's Training Plan will provide routes and means to support strong leadership, team development and improved ways to assess quality outcomes.
6. We will deliver the year 1 actions (2018/19) identified in the IIP assessment report.	IIP Oversight leads will ensure identified actions are addressed and reported on by March 2019.	

7. We will deliver the 2018/19 Health and Wellbeing Programme for all staff.	NISCC's Health and Wellbeing Committee will oversee the delivery of the Programme including engaging staff and evaluating outcomes, by March 2019.	NISCC staff will be supported in their physical, physiological, and social health wellbeing.
8. We will launch the NISCC Intranet.	NISCC Communications Team will develop and deliver an Intranet for all staff by October 2018.	Intranet will improve internal communications and provide a portal for a wide range of supporting resources across all aspects of work and delivery.
9. We will go live with a new ICT registration system (Socrates)	NISCC Database Team will work with staff and stakeholders to develop a new ICT registration system which will be launched July 2018.	New system will improve customer and user experience including data quality and reporting.
10. We will continue to review internal structures and resources to create a more streamlined, improved customer service experience, both in person and via telephone.	NISCC functional leads will work together to ensure a more positive experience is delivered for our registrants and stakeholders across all of the functions based on the previous year's benchmarks, by March 2019.	Ways in which the registrants and stakeholders experiences can be improved will be identified and measurable outcomes agreed. Where it is possible to effect this change during 2018/19 this will be identified and implemented.
11. We will ensure all new staff complete their e-learning on Q2020	All managers will ensure new staff complete learning on quality as part of their induction programme, during 2018/19.	All new staff receive an understanding and awareness of what quality means in NISCC and what their own role is in relation to quality.
12. We will continue to provide more online (website) resources for Social Workers, Social Care Workers, Internationally Quality Social Workers, and their employers.	NISCC will use the available software, including Adapt, to produce online learning resources including Induction Programme for Social Care Workers and Guidance for Managers and Safe Effective and Compassionate Care by March 2019.	Registrants and employers have a more flexible and accessible range of methods for accessing learning and development opportunities in supporting them delivering safe, quality and effective care.
13. We will deliver a minimum of 12 NISCC face to face Awareness and Information sessions to – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domiciliary Care Workers • Day Care Workers • Supported Living Workers • Residential/Nursing Care Workers • Social Care Managers 	NISCC will deliver a wide ranging programme of engagement across the sector to meet the needs of that workforce during 2018/19.	Registrants are better informed about their responsibilities in relation to registration, and the benefits of the Standards of Conduct and Practice.

14. We will undertake a Quality Improvement project to improve compliance with the mandatory PiP 2 Requirement policy.	NISCC will identify the benchmarks and actions to improve compliance in this area, by March 2019.	Evidence exists of registrants' compliance with the Standards of Conduct and Practice.
15. We will deliver an on-going engagement project with Domiciliary Care Employers and their staff to develop understanding and benefits of being registered and working to standards, using Quality Improvement methodology to track and report progress and outcomes of maintenance of registration.	NISCC will engage Domiciliary Care employers and their staff to identify the benchmarks and actions to improve understanding in this area, by March 2019.	Registrants and their employers are better informed about their responsibilities in maintaining their social care registration and the Standards of Conduct and Practice.
16. We will ensure there are clear and evidenced ways in which we will support improved quality of engagement with our Partnerships – Participation Partnership, Workforce Development Partnership, Professional in Practice Partnership and Registrants Forum.	NISCC will work alongside its Partnerships to ensure quality engagement takes places and can be evidenced.	NISCC's engagement with the Partnerships will be improved and of high quality at all times.

NISCC Organisational Chart 2017-18



Organisational Chart

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

CEO	-	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	-	Continuing Professional Development
DoH	-	Department of Health
HSC	-	Health and Social Care
HR	-	Human Resources
IIP	-	Investors in People
ILM	-	Institute of Leadership and Management
KPI	-	Key Performance Indicator
KSF	-	Knowledge and Skills Framework
NISCC	-	Northern Ireland Social Care Council
PIP	-	Professional in Practice
PLO's	-	Practice Learning Opportunities
PPI	-	Personal and Public Involvement

SMT - Senior Management Team

TNA - Training Needs Analysis