THE STRATEGY OF THE OFFICE OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY SERVICES DIRECTOR 2012-2015

Leading the nursing and midwifery contribution in the provision of delivery of safe, high quality, accessible healthcare services in Ireland

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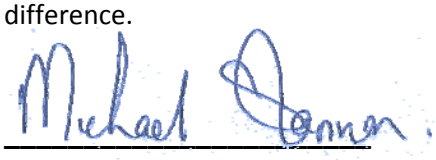
FOREWORD

Ireland is currently facing economic challenges that are unprecedented in the history of the state which ultimately impact on the provision of all services, and particularly the health and social care system which requires a significant proportion of the national budget. Concomitant with the financial constraints is the requirement to assure patient/client safety, enhance quality of the services provided in parallel with reconfiguration for greater effectiveness and efficiencies. These challenges mirror those facing countries across the world.

The Irish healthcare system has been experiencing reduced funding over the past 2-3 years with associated challenges. In light of the scale of these challenges, it is imperative that all stakeholders, including: nurses, midwives, medical practitioners, health and social care professionals, managers, trade unions and staff organisations collaborate with a single purpose, that is to provide a safe, high quality healthcare service that is responsive, timely and accessible to those who require such services i.e. in the right place at the right time that is efficient and cost effective. This is a hugely challenging agenda. However, I believe that the resource of nurses and midwives has the capacity, insight, dedication, commitment, tenacity and resilience in all parts of the healthcare services, to support and drive the necessary operational change agenda both on the ground at the frontline and also at managerial, corporate, strategic and policy development.

Nurses and midwifes have an unprecedented opportunity to engage and play a central role in re-engineering existing and new healthcare services in Ireland. The provision of safe, high quality and accessible care requires exceptional nursing and midwifery care and leadership. In order to support, enable and lead both of the professions to achieve this, the Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) has developed this strategy which sets out the vision, agreed direction and purpose to ***enable people to lead healthier and more fulfilled lives.*** Consultation with and feedback from Directors of Nursing and Midwifery and key stakeholders, at various forums across the country have informed the development of the strategy.

I look forward to working with you in providing a shared leadership and vision for nursing and midwifery services in Ireland and wish to acknowledge that it is the competence, care and dedication of nurses and midwives in various roles throughout healthcare services that make the real difference.



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1. INTRODUCTION

The world of nursing and midwifery is changing rapidly, with increasing patient expectations and service needs. The reform of healthcare services and how these services are delivered within finite resources are changing professional roles and demand increased innovation, productivity and greater efficiency. If nurses and midwifes are to respond effectively to these changes and ever increasing demand, there must be a plan for the future that focuses on the demands and also the concomitant opportunities. This strategy sets out a vision, an agreed direction and purpose for the Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD) which will lead and support nurses and midwives to deliver a healthcare system in Ireland that will **enable people to lead healthier and more fulfilled lives.**

The strategy is aligned to and supports the Health Service Executive (HSE) Corporate Strategy and National Service Plan. Inherent within this alliance is the commitment to ensure the optimum contribution of nursing and midwifery at corporate, regional and local operational level.

The strategy will inform operational priorities and actions to enable nurses and midwives achieve the required outcomes and provide safe, high quality care through a focus on:

- Corporate and Clinical Governance
- Provision of safe, quality care
- Leadership and innovation
- Practice development
- Continuing professional development

Over the lifetime of the HSE Corporate Strategy 2008-2011, the ONMSD has provided a corporate profile and leadership focus for the professions of nursing and midwifery. Key achievements include:

- Establishment of national nursing and midwifery health policies and initiatives such as nurse and midwife prescribing of medicinal products; nurses with authority to prescribe ionising radiation (X-Rays) ;
- Pursuit of excellence in nursing and midwifery practice through development of evidence based programmes for example in cancer care, care of the older person, pain management, dementia care, palliative care, patient safety, the productive series and patient flow systems in accident and emergency services;

- Unlocking potential and building leadership, as demonstrated through the nursing and midwifery contribution to the national Clinical Care programmes and development of the National Leadership and Innovation Centre for Nursing and Midwifery;

- Continuous quality improvement through promotion of robust risk management and effective governance, development of professional standards, protocols and frameworks, and supporting continuous professional development.

The Health Service Executive is focused on maximising opportunities to modernise core services, implement the national clinical care programmes and facilitate new service developments to achieve the appropriate balance and integration of hospital and community services, best care models, greater efficiency and effectiveness and value for money.

Given the scale of fiscal challenges, it is imperative that all stakeholders including health and social care professionals, managers, social partners, public representatives and the public work together with the single purpose of achieving the very best health and social care service for the population within the resources available. Nurses and midwives have a key role to play in leading and enabling some of the solutions to these challenges.

Nursing and midwifery care will continue to be a central pillar of Ireland's healthcare system and enhancing nursing and midwifery roles will assist in achieving key central principles:

- putting patients first;

- providing safe, high quality care across the continuum of requirement; and

- empowering nurses and midwives at the frontline. .

The patient / client experience is shaped by the quality of nursing and midwifery care therefore it is vital that nurses and midwives engage and play a central role in improving health care in Ireland. This requires strong leadership, nurturing of nurse and midwife leaders at every level of the health care system and robust performance management.

The role of the ONMSD is to ensure appropriate nursing and midwifery influence, nationally and internationally, and to enable the leadership required to secure world class nursing and midwifery services for Irish healthcare services that are fit for purpose today and into the future.

This strategy supports the objectives of the HSE Board and management and is also relevant to the Department of Health, Directors of Nursing and Midwifery, nurse/midwife leaders, front line nurses

and midwives, education providers, workforce planners, employers, independent providers of health care, and social partners.

2. PURPOSE OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

The contribution of nurses and midwives within the healthcare service affects everyone in Ireland at some time in their lives. The quality of health care and the success of health care reforms depend on the contribution of nurses and midwives. The role of the ONMSD is to facilitate that contribution through providing a strategic leadership focus, professionally and corporately, for the professions of nursing and midwifery. The promotion of health and well being and delivery of safe high quality care is and will continue to be achieved through the ONMSD's strategic enablement of nursing and midwifery.

3. VISION

The vision of ONMSD is that nurses and midwives will be world leaders in caring, humanity, compassion, expertise and innovation, committed to improving the health and wellbeing of the people of Ireland and delivering high quality health and personal social care.

The values underpinning the vision and purpose augment our commitment to the values of the HSE:

- **respect** for patients, clients and each other;
- **fairness and equity** – providing healthcare based on need and striving for an equitable health service;
- **excellence** – striving for the highest level of achievement in all aspects of nursing and midwifery services;
- **leadership** – strategic and ethical leadership, enabling nursing and midwifery to achieve a shared purpose in the face of uncertainty; and
- **accountability and responsibility** – honesty, consistency and accountability in decision-making and actions. Ensuring individual integrity, responsibility, accountability and empowerment; measuring performance and quality assurance.

4. A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE OFFICE OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY SERVICES DIRECTOR (ONMSD)

The ONMSD's analysis of the political, social, economic and professional issues has identified five themes which will be the focus of its strategy over the next three years. These themes will provide the strategic framework for the ONMSD as follows:

4.1 Corporate and Clinical Governance

Rationale

The challenges and opportunities in reforming the health and social care system to secure a health service in Ireland which delivers better health care, together with better outcomes and better value for money requires leadership and effort from all health and social care staff. Nurses and midwives play a central role in corporate and clinical governance. Their leadership and commitment is vital to the success of the current reforms.

It is critical that nurses and midwives take opportunities now to ensure they are further represented at senior decision making tables, influencing the needs assessment, planning, procurement, management and delivery of healthcare services. Equally, with the establishment of integrated services and inter- disciplinary team working, it is opportune for nurses and midwives to co-ordinate their role within inter-disciplinary teams and to take on the leadership role where appropriate.

Objectives

1. Establish processes and systems that strengthen and promote the position of nursing and midwifery within corporate and clinical governance structures at national, regional and local level.
2. Enable nurse and midwife leaders to lead the clinical governance agenda in partnership with other key professionals and provide advice at corporate level on issues relating to patient safety and risk, clinical effectiveness and service user involvement
3. Develop strategies to support Directors of Nursing and Midwifery to deliver nursing and midwifery services that are of the highest standard, effective, value for money and responsive to health service needs and service reform.
4. Establish systems to enable nurses and midwives to make the transition to new roles, equipping them with the appropriate skills and competencies.

4.2 Provision of Safe Quality Care

Rationale

The public rightly expect safe high quality health care. Nurses and midwives are accountable for continuously improving the quality of their practice and safeguarding high standards of care by creating an environment in which excellence in clinical care can flourish. The drive towards a culture of performance and accountability presents opportunities to identify and measure the nursing and midwifery contribution to health and social care outcomes.

It is vital that nursing and midwifery profession articulate how it adds value to safety, health outcomes, patient /client experience, effectiveness and efficiency and how that contribution can be further enhanced. This information is core to influencing the patient safety and quality agenda and must be articulated from the patient /client in any practice setting to the Boardroom.

Objectives

1. Ensure leaders in nursing and midwifery lead on key elements of quality and service improvement in partnership with others, nationally, regionally and locally.
2. Measure quality of nursing and midwifery care, patient experience and health outcomes using national key performance indicators.
3. Improve clinical care and communication through provision of standardised data management systems.
4. Develop strategies to support Directors of Nursing and Midwifery to deliver nursing and midwifery services that are of the highest standard, effective, value for money and responsive to health service needs and service reform
5. Empower and support nurses and midwives to challenge unsafe practice and provide solutions in their role as champions of patient safety, quality and risk management.

4.3 Leadership and Innovation

Rationale

Nurses and midwives strive to achieve the best health outcomes for the population and improve the experience for individual patients/clients within available resources. Achieving these three inter-related aims is extremely challenging in the current socio-economic environment in which greater productivity is required with fewer resources. Nurses and midwifes must embrace and drive change, lead innovation and measure performance.

Objectives

1. Develop a national leadership and innovation strategy for nursing and midwifery.
2. Promote and support the development of leaders and leadership competence.
3. Enable and promote nurses and midwives to lead change, innovation, service design, development and delivery, utilising continuous improvement processes.
4. Nurture, support and develop nurse/ midwife leadership potential at all levels in the healthcare services.
5. Profile and market the image of nursing and midwifery.

4.4 Continuing Professional Development

Rationale

The ONMSD has a strong reputation in enabling nurses and midwives to maintain, further develop and improve the standard of their practice through continuing education, training and professional development. In the current environment of ongoing organisational and service reform in tandem with increasing health care demands, it is critical that there is a nursing and midwifery workforce which is dynamic, knowledgeable, highly skilled and competent, responsive and fit for practice and purpose now and into the future.

Objectives

1. Ensure that nurse and midwife registration education programmes are fit for purpose and deliver value for money
2. Support nurses and midwives to work in different care settings, take on new and expanded roles and be facilitated to develop the necessary knowledge, range of skills and competence for such roles through the development of national policies and procedures and support of continuing education.
3. Ensure that post-registration nurse and midwife education programmes are informed by healthcare service needs, are effective and value for money.
4. Prepare to support individual nurses and midwives' continuous competence assurance for ongoing registration and professional development in compliance with pending legislation i.e. the Nurses and Midwives Bill.

4.5 Practice Development

Rationale

Within nursing, midwifery and Irish healthcare systems, organisational cultures can either "invite" or "impede" participation from healthcare professionals and patients/clients to discuss and make decisions to enhance and improve patient/client care. Practice Development methodologies facilitate all stakeholders to have an equal opportunity to participate in meaningful conversations about the practice environment, and thereby enabling nurses and midwives to understand, challenge and change the culture to improve care. It is essential nurses and midwives become active participants in leading systematic approaches to transform work based cultures to deliver person-centred care and thereby develop practice.

Objectives

1. Develop a national strategy for Practice Development for Nursing and Midwifery.
2. Support nurses and midwives to develop facilitation and work-based learning i.e. knowledge, skills, competence and expertise in building capacity and infrastructures across role boundaries and disciplines.
3. Enable nurses and midwives to be effective team members and team leaders
4. Enable nurses and midwives to maximise the potential for patients/carers to express their needs, participate in care decisions and engage in the evaluation of care processes and outcomes.
5. Ensure that the development of practice is supported by the best available evidence.

5. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

This strategy provides a framework for the Office of Nursing and Midwifery Services Director in which to operate over the next three years. To bring life to and operationalise the framework at all levels of nursing and midwifery services , each pillar within the ONMSD will be required to review its current role within the context of corporate and clinical governance structures and the strategic objectives already described. Each pillar will then develop and work to an annual business plan, to achieve these strategic objectives in conjunction with the HSE National Service Plan. The plan for each pillar will:

- outline what it will achieve over the next 12 months to implement the ONMSD agreed strategic objectives in conjunction with the HSE National Service Plan;
- set specific key performance targets for the year;

- ensure the resources and arrangements needed to deliver the business plans are in place; and
- report at ONMSD and HSE Board level, providing the necessary monitoring and adjustment of the overall strategy.