

Implementation of Recommendations of the Commission on Nursing

Third Annual Progress Report of Monitoring Committee

2002

Introduction

- 1.1 This is the third annual report of the Monitoring Committee established by the Minister for Health and Children to oversee progress in the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Report of the Commission on Nursing *A Blueprint for the Future*. It outlines the further progress made during 2002 in achieving targets set out in the Priority Action Plan for 2002 and 2003 agreed between the Department of Health and Children and the Nursing Alliance.
- 1.2 The Monitoring Committee is pleased to note that the Government provided a further €7.9 million in 2002 for initiatives under the Priority Action Plan. This brings to €35.8 million in total the amount made available since 2000 for the implementation of the Commission on Nursing's recommendations set out in the Plan.
- 1.3 The Monitoring Committee particularly welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Health and Children on 1 November 2001 of Government approval for his proposals for the implementation of degree level education for nursing students in 2002, and for the substantial additional capital and revenue funding required to underpin the development. This decision will implement a central recommendation of the Commission on Nursing, and will put the education of nurses on a par with that of other health care professionals.
- 1.4 The focus of this annual report is on the progress made during 2002 in the implementing the recommendations contained in the agreed Action Plan.

Monitoring Committee

Membership

2.1 The membership of the Monitoring Committee is as follows:

Bernard Carey (Chairperson) *	Department of Health and Children
Kieran Feely (Chairperson)*	Department of Health and Children
Mary McCarthy	Department of Health and Children
Susan Reilly	Department of Health and Children
Teresa Cody	Department of Health and Children
Eugene Donoghue	An Bord Altranais
Gerard Barry	Health Service Employers Agency
Brendan Mulligan	Health Service Employers Agency
Maureen Windle	Northern Area Health Board
John Cregan	Midland Health Board
Michael Lenihan	National Maternity Hospital
Aidan Gleeson	Cappagh Orthopaedic Hospital
Jim Gilmartin	Cregg House
Maura Donovan	Stewarts Hospital (Alternate for Mr Gilmartin)
Claire Spillane**	Irish Nurses Organisation
Deirdre Daly***	Irish Nurses Organisation
David Hughes	Irish Nurses Organisation
Eilish Hardiman****	Irish Nurses Organisation
Eilish Corcoran****	Irish Nurses Organisation
Gerry Coone	Psychiatric Nurses Association
Des Kavanagh	Psychiatric Nurses Association
Kay Collins	SIPTU
Padraig Heverin	SIPTU
Kevin Callinan	IMPACT
Yvonne O'Shea	National Council for Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery
Joan Phelan	Nursing and Midwifery Planning & Development Unit, South Eastern Health Board

*Mr..Kieran Feely replaced Mr. Bernard Carey in June 2002

**Ms. Claire Spillane replaced Ms. Lenore Mrkwicka in June 2002

***Ms. Deirdre Daly replaced Ms. Claire Spillane in December 2002

****Ms. Eilish Corcoran replaced Ms. Eilish Hardiman in December 2002

Meetings

2.2 The Monitoring Committee met on four occasions during 2002.

Secretarial Support

2.3 The Monitoring Committee once again wishes to record its sincere appreciation of the staff of the Nursing Policy Division of the Department of Health and Children for their assistance in servicing its meetings.

Progress in Implementing Recommendations in 2002

3.1 National Council for Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery

The Department of Health & Children has provided the National Council with an Annual Budget of €2.54 million for Continuing Education. A total of 81 continuing education programmes were funded during 2002 by the National Council – this figure is made up of 13 programmes that are in their second year of operation, following on from 2001, and 68 new programmes for 2002.

The joint appointment of a Research Development Officer by the National Council and the Health Research Board has been finalised during this year. The focus of the role is as follows-

- Building research capacity
- Implementing the forthcoming Research Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery in Ireland
- Working with the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units on the specific recommendations that will emerge from the Strategy
- Acting as a communications conduit for research related activities in nursing and midwifery in Ireland
- Building research awareness and activity

In order to facilitate the development of this role and to increase its profile, special sections of the National Council's website and newsletter are now dedicated to research. The Research Development Officer is also part of the team that plans and delivers the Spring and Autumn regional meetings organised with the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units.

Guidelines on the Development of Courses Preparing Nurses and Midwives as CNS/CMS and ANP/AMP were published by the National Council in May 2002.

A Database of Third Level Courses for Nurses and Midwives has been developed and went live from early October 2002.

The National Council has approved the following Clinical Nurse/Midwife Specialist positions under the Immediate Pathway up to the 31st December 2002:

Division of the Register of Nurses	Immediate	Intermediate	Number Approved
General	788	48	836
Psychiatry*	380	12	392
Midwifery	28	2	30
Sick Children	53	3	56
Mental Handicap	100	2	102
Total	1,349	67	1,416

*Includes Community Mental Nurses 214

The National Council has approved the following Advanced Nurse or Midwife Practitioner posts up to 31st December 2002:

APN (Emergency)	3
APN (Sexual Health)	1
Total	4

The National Council Executive held meetings with the Directors of the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units during 2002. In addition, a series of Regional Meetings were organised in partnership with the Units. These meetings were attended by the Directors of Nursing, Nursing Practice Development Coordinators, representatives of the third level colleges and other relevant senior nursing and midwifery personnel. Some of the meetings are also attended by CEOs / General Managers. The meetings are held in each of the Health Board areas twice a year, in Spring and Autumn.

Four editions of the National Council Newsletter were distributed to every nurse / midwife during 2002.

The National Council's website www.ncnm.ie continues to be developed and added to. One of the new features introduced is the hosting of websites for specialist groups such as the Respiratory Nurse Specialists Group and the Irish Diabetes Nurses Group. The Website has added a wide range of links to other relevant websites. In general the website is developing as a resource for the profession, containing documents and references that are of relevance from an educational or general professional development point of view. Thus for example, all of the presentations used at the annual conference are available on the website. The website also contains information on the National Council, including a detailed Power Point presentation.

The second annual conference of the National Council was held on Wednesday 20th and Thursday 21st November 2002 at the Alexander Hotel in Dublin. The conference was a one-day conference, repeated on the following day. The strategy is aimed at ensuring the maximum number of participants. Over the two days, over 900 nurses and midwives attended the conference. The title of the conference was ***Building on the Health Strategy – Challenges for Nurses and Midwives.***

3.2 Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units

All eight Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units (NMPDU) have now been established and are at various stages of development. The primary role of the units is strategic planning and policy development for nursing and midwifery services in a health board area. This function extends beyond the board to the voluntary sector, practice nursing and the independent sector. At national level, the units work in partnership with the Nursing Policy Division, Department of Health and Children, and with the National Council for

the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery. While at regional level, a partnership approach is also maintained in working with Directors of Nursing, General Managers, and other key stakeholders.

Six broad strategic themes have been agreed by the Director's group under which work is planned, operationalised and evaluated. It is acknowledged however that service and professional needs vary from board to board.

Strategic Themes

- Leadership
- Workforce planning
- Research
- Practice development
- Continuing professional development
- Service initiatives

Leadership

Leadership is interpreted as having two key components – influencing and empowering. At regional level, the Directors of NMPDU's communicate and influence the nursing agenda at corporate level. Equally, the NMPDU's work with Directors of Nursing in the planning and provision of management development/leadership opportunities.

Workforce Planning

Each NMPDU is currently working towards the establishment of a Minimum Data Set of all nurses and midwives within a healthboard area. This exercise is largely replicating the successful pilots undertaken in St. James's Hospital, Dublin, and the North Western Health Board. Other initiatives to support workforce planning include the following:-

- Collation of data in respect of nursing and midwifery turnover
- Promotion of nursing as a career
- Government to government initiatives
- Completion of a video "Promotion of Midwifery as a Career"
- Work in hand to promote paediatric nursing
- Exchange consortia established
- Participation in integrated workforce planning at regional level
- Workshops for nurse/midwife managers to reflect on their role as a key player in the retention of staff
- Return to practice programmes
- Initiatives to promote cultural awareness
- Strategic role in planning and provision of Healthcare Assistant programme
- Turnover study in three Dublin maternity hospitals

A Workforce Planner has been recruited in each NMPDU.

Research

The NMPDU's from the outset have sought to promote evidence based practice and research awareness through the provision and support of appropriate programmes. Recommendations outlined in the Research Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery in Ireland identified the Director's of NMPDU's as having key responsibility in the implementation of the institutional commitment and the development of a research based culture.

Practice Development

The NMPDU's aim to support the continuous improvement of person centred care in all care settings. Key working links have been established with personnel supporting practice development at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Many of the projects at regional level, have a focus on practice development, i.e. Practice Development Project for Care of the Elderly, Midwifery Development, and Project to Enhance Nursing Services in A&E departments. Development of a strategic framework outlining the nursing contribution in the provision of a comprehensive intellectual disability service.

Continuing Professional Development

The NMPDU's have a remit to oversee the provision of continuing nurse and midwife education in a health board area. Systems have been developed to co-ordinate regional education in line with local service and professional needs, and laterally this function is being operationalised in collaboration with the Director's of the Centre of Nurse Education and local boards of management. The Fees Initiative has provided support to nurses and midwives to undertake Diplomas, Degrees and Higher Diplomas. In many boards the regional administration of the initiative is managed by the NMPDU. In two health boards a BA in Mental Health is offered to registered psychiatric nurses in partnership with a UK university. The Director's of the NMPDU's work collaboratively with colleagues locally in the third level sector in planning courses at post-graduate level. This includes programmes to support CNS/CMS post holders and agreed ANP/AMP posts. Collaborative work is also ongoing with directors of nursing and service managers in the development of new CNS/CMS and ANP/AMP posts in line with service need. Individual units have hosted a number of conferences and master classes i.e., Alcohol and the Family: Challenging the Impact, Behaviours that Challenge, Risk Management, Magnet Nursing Conference, Cultural Diversity in Nursing

Service Initiatives

Extension of nurse/midwife led care demonstrates the overall development of nursing and midwifery that is currently underway and supports the implementation of goals and actions outlined in 'Quality and Fairness – A Health System for You'. To date, the nursing and midwifery planning and development units have initiated and supported service development, with a particular focus on consumer needs and

the potential to maximize expansion of the professional role of nurses and midwives.

Examples of initiatives include:-

- Integrated Hospital/Community Midwifery Project
- Self harm pilot project in A&E departments
- Development of the Role of the RMHN in the Community
- Integrated Strategy on Postnatal Depression

While the focus of the Directors of Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units is at strategic level, it is acknowledge that individual service providers define the quality of the service delivered. Enabling and empowering the individual service provider to carry out their role effectively through the development and support of best practice is also acknowledged to be of key importance.

3.3 Revised National Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery in the Community

The NAMIC Steering Group met on the 25th November 2002 in the Department of Health and Children (DOHC). Ms. Mary McCarthy, Chief Nursing Officer, DOHC updated the Steering Group on recent events since the group met on the 18th / 19th June 2002. Over the summer the Project Officer for NAMIC, Ms. Una Lynch was on leave and as her contract expired on the 30th September 2002 she resumed her post in Queen's University Belfast. The Community Nurse Advisor, Ms. Mary O'Neill has been appointed Project Officer for NAMIC, at which point the work on the NAMIC project was re-evaluated and a revised project plan was drawn up. Ms. Catriona Murphy, DCU has been appointed Project Assistant for NAMIC, and is working on the project two days a week since November 2002.

The revised project plan was outlined to the Steering Group, which included the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Group, the Project Team, Project Officer, and the Project Assistant.

A Steering Group with representatives from key agencies and chaired by the Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health and Children (DOHC) will have lead responsibility for the production of the NAMIC strategy.

The terms of reference were clarified, namely the NAMIC Project Officer has responsibility for the production of the strategy and final approval lies with the Steering Group. The Steering Group agreed this on the 25th November 2002. In addition, the revised project plan includes a review of a number of policy documents covering nursing and midwifery, general health and related health policy. The nurse advisors in the Nursing Policy Division are undertaking these policy reviews to inform the NAMIC strategy. Work of the group is ongoing with a completion date of Summer 2003.

3.4 Study of the Nursing and Midwifery Resource

The Nursing and Midwifery Resource: Final Report of the Steering Group – *Towards Workforce Planning*

The Minister for Health and Children, Mr Micheál Martin, T.D., launched *Towards Workforce Planning*, the [final report of the Steering Group on the Nursing and Midwifery Resource](#) on Wednesday the 11th September 2002 (a full copy of the Ministers speech is available at <http://www.doh.ie/pressroom/sp20020911.html>). *The Commission on Nursing* (Par 7.16) clearly identified the need to strengthen the workforce planning function in the Department of Health and Children - the *Study of the Nursing and Midwifery Resource* was established in December 1998 to address this issue.

The report is the result of three and a half years extensive study. It describes the detailed analysis undertaken and charts the paths necessary for the production of incisive workforce plans. The ultimate aim is to have the optimum number of nurses and midwives in the right place at the right time, with the necessary skills to ensure that the patient receives the highest standard of care when needed. The report recommends the best possible approach to workforce planning for nursing and midwifery and how this may be kept under review.

A number of issues influenced the progress of the study - chief among these was gaps in essential information required for forecasting. To this end a major achievement of the study was the establishment of the National Nursing and Midwifery Human Resource Dataset. The Minister urged all organisations employing nurses and midwives to adopt and use the minimum dataset on an ongoing basis, as it is a critical element to successful implementation of workforce planning.

For the first time a comprehensive approach to workforce planning for nursing and midwifery is identified in the report. The steering group proposes a top-down and bottom-up approach with workforce planning for nursing and midwifery taking place at local, regional and national level on an ongoing basis.

Two supporting texts also form part of the suite of documents related to the study:

- *Guidance For Best Practice on the Recruitment of Overseas Nurses and Midwives*, published in December 2001, and
- *The Report of The National Study of Turnover in Nursing and Midwifery*, undertaken by a research team based at University College Cork (also launched by the Minister on the 11th September 2002).

The three documents are available in PDF format on the Departments website (www.doh.ie). Each of the eight *Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units* are taking responsibility for circulating the document across each region, additional copies are also available from the Nursing Policy Division of the Department.

3.5 Commencement of new four-year Pre-Registration Nursing Degree programme

The National Implementation Committee was established by the Minister for Health and Children in January 2000 and charged with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the pre-registration nursing degree programme in time for 2002. The Committee addressed all of the recommendations of the Nursing Education Forum as requested. The pre-registration nursing degree programme commenced in thirteen higher education institutes in partnership with affiliated health service agencies around the country in September, 2002.

On the first of August, 2002 many nurse teachers transferred to the higher education sector in preparation for the commencement of the degree programme. Nurse teachers and all those involved in this initiative must be commended on their versatility and ability to seize the opportunity to bring about such significant change.

The transfer of the pre-registration nursing education to degree level is truly a landmark date that will be recorded in the history of Irish nursing. There is no doubt that the shift of pre-registration nursing education to degree level will be instrumental in contributing to the provision of quality health care of the nation.

3.6 Intake of Nursing Students

The Nursing Careers Centre (NCC), was set up under the management of An Bord Altranais in November 1998, to:

- Facilitate a centralised system of processing and selection of applicants wishing to enter nursing
- Promote and market nursing as a career
- Provide career guidance.

In carrying out its functions, the NCC works closely with a number of key stakeholders, including: Department of Health and Children; the Healthcare Sector; the Office of the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commission (OCSLAC); the Central Applications Office (CAO); the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); the Institute of Guidance Counsellors (IGC); and others from time to time.

In the year 2002, the Pre-Registration Programmes in General Nursing (RGN), Psychiatric Nursing (RPN) and Mental Handicap Nursing (RMHN) were, for the first time, at Degree level, with successful completion of the four-year Degree Programme leading to Registration with An Bord Altranais (RGN or RPN or RMHN) and the award of a Bachelor of Science (BSc) Degree in Nursing from the HEI.

13 HEIs in association with 45 Healthcare Agencies, offer 1,640 places:

Discipline	Healthcare Agencies	HEIs	Places
General	21	13	1,057
Psychiatric	14	12	343
Mental Handicap	10	8	240
Total	45	13	1,640

Applications 2002

There were 9,605 applications for the Pre-Registration Degree Programme in Nursing to the CAO, of which 1,857 were mature code applicants.

Mature Code Applicants 2002

The NCC continued to process Mature Code Applicants, encompassing Written Assessment and Interview. 850 successful applicants were placed on an Order of Merit list for each course for which they applied, with the scores ranging between 123 & 206. The position on the Order of Merit list was determined by the Score achieved at the Written Assessment. The Round Zero cut-off score for each course were published in *Nursing A Career for You*.

Up to 40 places for the HealthCare Workers Sponsorship Scheme were available from the Mature Code Applicants cohort. All 40 places were offered: 18 General; 11 Psychiatric; 11 Mental Handicap.

Codes

Resulting from a Discussion Paper produced by the NCC and circulated to all key stakeholders, the number of Course Codes for 2003 will be 34 as opposed to 45 in 2002. This reduction was brought about by allocating only one code to a HEI where it provides more than one of the same course, e.g. UCC has 3 general hospitals attached to it but from 2003 will only have 1 general code. The exception to this is the Adelaide, which will retain its separate code from the other two general hospitals attached to Trinity College. There will still be separate codes for mature and standard code applicants in all HEIs.

Application Form

The year 2001 was the first year that application to nursing was through the CAO system. In that year, although application was through the CAO, the Application Form for Nursing was separate from the main CAO Application Form. This separate form contained 3 sections: General, Psychiatric, Mental Handicap Nursing. This meant that an applicant could apply for 30 courses in nursing as well as 20 courses on the main form.

In 2002, Nursing was on the main CAO Form. However, the Form contained five separate sections. This meant that again an applicant

could apply for 50 courses, including 10 General, 10 Psychiatric, 10 Mental Handicap.

In 2003, nursing will be part of the main Degree list, which means that not only will it be competing with itself (34 courses) but will be also competing with the plethora of other Degree courses on offer. However, a major advantage of this system is that the applicant is going to have to think harder about her/his choice on the CAO form and not just tick boxes simply because they are there. There can be little doubt that the new form will lead to a some reduction in the number of applicants to nursing. But it will lead to a more realistic picture; the need for a Vacant Places Competition will be recognised earlier; and hopefully places will be filled in earlier Rounds of Offers.

Research

The NCC has commenced research to determine what forms/types of Advertising & Information are having an impact on those entering nursing.

Another piece of Research planned for 2003 is the gender issue among applicants to nursing.

Promotion & Marketing

Since its inception, the NCC has carried out a major campaign in the whole area of promotion and marketing of nursing. This campaign has proved very successful as can be seen from the 35% increase in the number of applications for nursing in 2002.

3.7 Health Care Assistants Training Programme

The pilot programme run in conjunction with the NCVA, for the training of healthcare assistants was successfully completed in 17 sites nationally in May 2002.

An independent and external evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the pilot programme within the diversity of an evolving modern health service was commissioned by the Nursing Policy Division. This evaluation is nearing completion and it is intended to roll out the training programme in the Autumn.

3.8 Care of the Elderly

A Nurse Adviser for Care of the Elderly/Palliative Care was appointed in October 2002. This will help to progress the relevant recommendations relating to services for the elderly contained in the Action Plan.

3.9 National Research Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery

The Research Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery was launched by the Minister for Health and Children, Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D., on

Wednesday, January, 22nd 2003 at the College of Physicians, Kildare Street.

The Report is being widely circulated to the educational institutions and to the Nursing and Midwifery profession via the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Units. This Report has been welcomed and its implementation will commence with the first meeting of the Research Committee in March 2003, who will meet quarterly and agree a project plan for implementation with the joint appointed Research and Development Officer of the Health Research Board and the National Council for Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery.

3.10 Proposed Framework for the Development of Clinical Specialism and Advanced Practice in Mental Handicap Nursing

The Report of the Commission on Nursing recognised the need to develop educational programmes to underpin the role of clinical nurse specialists and advanced nurse practitioners in intellectual disability services. Prior to the establishment of the National Council, the Nursing Policy Division of the Department of Health and Children initiated a consultative process with mental handicap nurses to determine both the specialist and advanced nursing roles undertaken by mental handicap nurses and the educational framework required to support these specialist and advanced roles. This report outlines the project which aims to initiate discussion on the future development of clinical specialism, advanced practice and supporting educational programmes for mental handicap nurses in Ireland. The report recommends potential areas for the development of clinical specialisms and advanced practice in mental handicap nursing. The Project Officer was Ms Siobhan O'Halloran, Department of Health and Children. Ms O'Halloran was assisted by Ms Anna Plunkett, Director of Nursing, St Mary's Drumcar, Co Louth. The report was distributed nationally in March 2003.

3.11 Study Leave

It has not been possible to implement the provision of two days paid study leave each year to nurses and midwives employed in the public health service for continuing professional education due to budgetary constraints.

3.12 Paediatric Nurse Education Review Group

The Report of the Paediatric Nurse Education Review Group was published in December 2000. The implementation of its recommendations is ongoing.

3.13 Vacant Permanent Posts

The filling of these posts is ongoing. Where problems arise, the issues should be resolved at local level.

3.14 Change of Title Sick Children's Nurse to Child Health Nurse

An Bord Altranais are currently surveying mental handicap nurses and sick children's nurses with a view to implementing a "fast track" change in their respective job titles.

3.15 Amendment of the rules of An Bord Altranais

Such an amendment requires legislative change. This is being undertaken by the Department of Health and Children in its current review of the Nurses Act, 1985.

