

NORTHERN IRELAND
SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

Business Plan

2017-2018

Protecting the public and safeguarding service users through the regulation and development of the social work profession and the social care workforce

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) is an Arms-Length Body, sponsored by the Department of Health. NISCC published a four year Corporate Plan detailing its approach to delivering and developing services for the social care workforce from 2017/18 to 2020/21. NISCC's Corporate Plan takes account of an evolving social care environment and the recommendations arising from a number of reviews and publications, most notably the Minister of Health's strategy 'Health and Wellbeing 2026' and the Bengoa Review of Health and Social Care. This Business Plan is the first annual plan which will underpin the commitments set out in NISCC's Corporate Plan.

Our Corporate Plan for 2017/18 – 2020/21 is based on the following five themes –

- Standards
- Regulation
- Development
- Leadership
- Engagement

It explains the strategic actions which we have committed to delivering over the next four years so that we can deliver measurable and transparent outcomes for the social work and social care sector. We have been ambitious in our statements and will deliver these through a programme of actions over the next four years to ensure we remain on course to accomplish what we have set out to do in our Corporate Plan.

Our journey starts in 2017/18 and this annual business plan is the first step towards delivering on our four year goals. This Business Plan details a wide range of business objectives which will collectively support the outcomes set out in our Corporate Plan. We will measure our progress throughout the year to ensure we remain focused and on

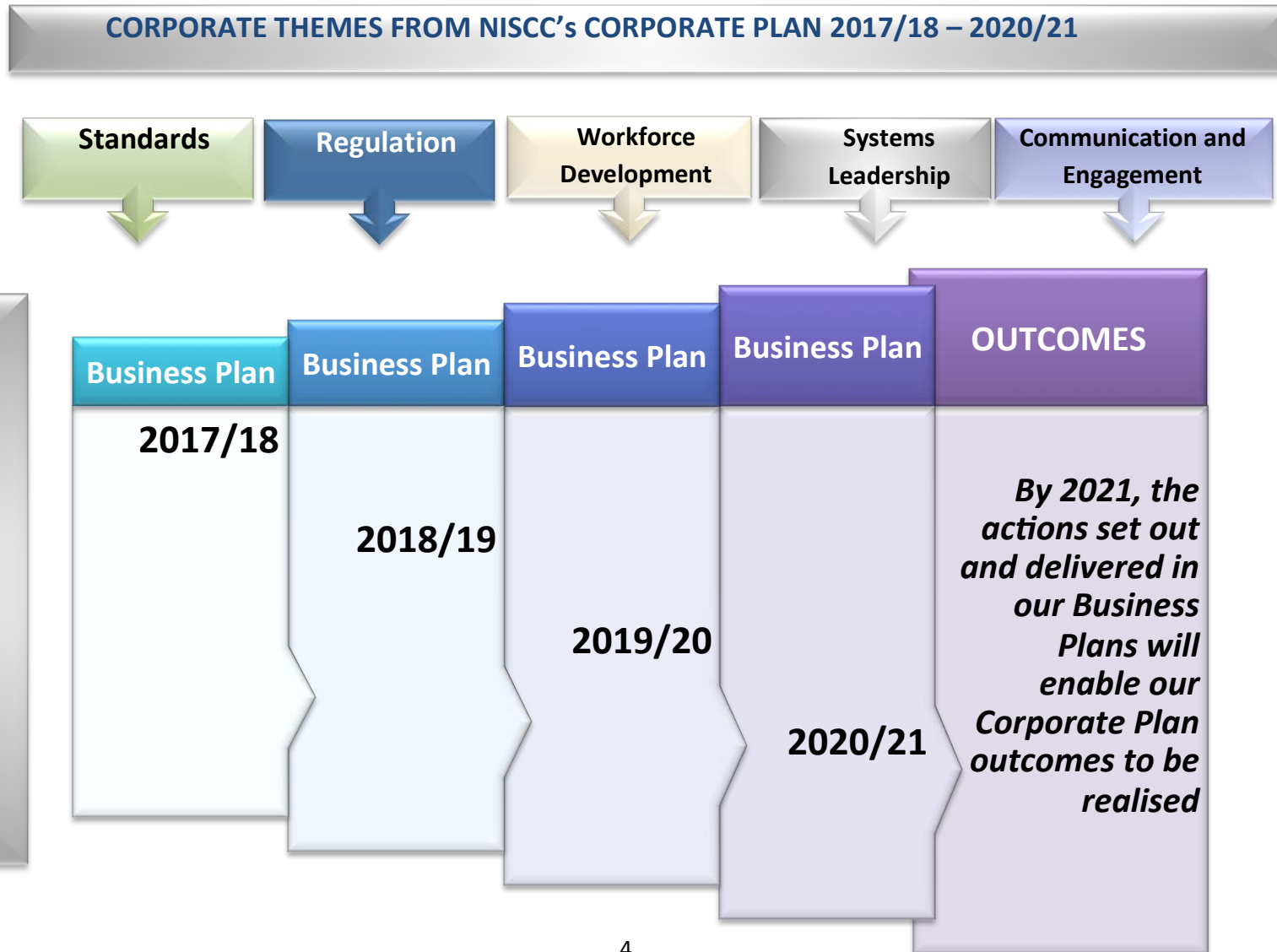
target. In addition, we manage a number of Key Performance Indicators and Standards which are set out at the end of this Plan.

We are committed to building on the work we delivered in 2016/17 which transformed the profile of our register; which now includes over 30,000 registrants. We actively promoted and embedded our Standards of Conduct and Practice as fundamental to quality practice in social care and introduced our new Fitness to Practise regulation model which allows for a greater focus on improving poor practice. Our Professional in Practice Framework for social workers created new opportunities for social workers to achieve recognition for all of their learning and development activity and social care managers were supported to think about their development needs. Through all of this, delivering quality services has remained our priority and, as you will see in this Business Plan, that continues to be the case.

In setting out our objectives and actions for 2017/18 we recognise that we do not work in isolation but in order to be successful we operate in partnership with a number of important groups, most notably the Participation Partnership for service users and carers, the Registrants' Forum, the Workforce Development Partnership and the Professional in Practice Partnership. The work and support of these groups are fundamental to our vision and our purpose.

Our publications and progress against our Plans can be found on our website at www.niscc.info or email NISCC directly for more information at info@niscc.hscni.net

DELIVERING OUTCOMES THROUGH EFFECTIVE PLANNING



Putting Standards at the heart of Social Work and Social Care Practice both in relation to practice and education and training

Over the next four years, we will –

- Develop a range of accessible and adaptable learning methods and models for the registered workforce and their employers to support the application of Standards in Practice; and
- Work with registrants, employers and service users to support the consistent application of the Standards of Conduct and Practice.

This will produce the following outcomes by 2020/21–

1. The Standards of Conduct and Practice are relevant, trusted, understood and embedded

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will disseminate lessons from our fitness to practise processes to guide and inform workforce development. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers and social care workers have a better understanding of service user expectations of their conduct and practice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will launch easy-read versions of the Standards of Conduct and Practice. 	<p>June 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service users will have access to the Standards to inform their understanding of what they can expect from their social worker/social care worker.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop an electronic learning platform that will provide a minimum of 3 evidence based interactive products to support registrants in meeting their standards of conduct and practice. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registrants will have access to a range of learning materials and guidance that will support their understanding and help embed quality standards in their practice.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will undertake a minimum of 6 engagement events with registrants, their managers and employers and use electronic means of communications to help them embed the standards of conduct and practice into their everyday practice and organisational context. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are used in a practice specific, meaningful and dynamic way to improve quality.

Putting Standards at the heart of Social Work and Social Care Practice both in relation to practice and education and training

2. NISCC's Standards for Employers support the delivery of effective social work and social care services

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will launch and disseminate revised Standards for Employers. 	<p>May 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers will be aware of their regulatory responsibilities in supporting their workforce.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with RQIA to establish arrangements for feedback on compliance with the Standards. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a more joined up approach in relation to oversight of Employer Standards.

Over the next four years we will –

- Improve the understanding of the role and contribution of regulation in securing public protection and enabling professionalism to thrive in social work and social care.
- Ensure the integrity and effectiveness of our registration, regulation and social work education functions.

This will produce the following outcomes by 2020/21–

1. Social work and social care registration is valued and trusted

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure the social care register is accurate and only reflects those deemed fit to practise in line with our Key Performance Indicators and standards. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The register is accurate and updated within the Key Performance Indicators.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will undertake a review of data quality in relation to the information held on the register. 	<p>Nov 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC will have identified any potential gaps or anomalies in data quality to enable it to develop measurable actions for improvement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to manage Fitness to Practise Committees effectively against our Key Performance Indicators. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearings are held within the agreed timeframes and within the Key Performance Indicators.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will scope the potential to strengthen the alignment between the PIP Framework and the registration requirements for social workers. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC will have evidence to enable it to develop proposals to embed a culture of competence based learning and development.

2. NISCC is an agile regulator able to respond to changing need and demand

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with other regulators and the Professional Standards Authority to ensure that our regulatory model is based on best practice and reflective of current regulatory thinking. • We will engage with social care employers in the private and independent sectors to ensure understanding of appropriate referral threshold levels for fitness to practise. • We will work with education institutions to promote a culture of quality and safety in social work practice. 	<p>March 2018</p> <p>March 2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC’s external relationships are strengthened and an evidence-base is established to shape NISCC’s thinking in relation to ongoing regulatory reform and improvement. • Benchmark Report of referrals to Fitness to Practise against Standards of Acceptance. • NISCC will have worked with the Degree in Social Work programme to map the Degree in Social Work curriculum against the World Health Organisation Patient Safety curriculum; and • NISCC will have worked with the Degree in Social Work programmes to integrate the Q2020 Attributes Framework into the curriculum.

3. Social work education and training meets the needs of registrants and employers

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work in partnership with employers and education providers to ensure the Degree in Social Work and provision within the PiP Framework is responsive to the changing practice environment for social work. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social work curriculum is relevant and current.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will approve and monitor social work education and training at qualifying and post qualifying levels to ensure it meets our quality standards and supports safe and effective practice. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision is fit for purpose.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will undertake PRTL and AYE audits to ensure that registrants continue to meet standards for registration. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance that registrants meet requirements for ongoing registration.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop arrangements for the audit of PRTL of social care workers in partnership with the sector. 	<p>Dec 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC will be in a position to develop the way forward in relation to the audit of the social care workforce.

4. Fitness to Practise decisions are trusted

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will deliver the Fitness to Practise Key Performance Indicators and standards during 2017/18. • We will carry out an independent audit of case closures and consensual disposals within the Fitness to Practise process. • We will provide appropriate and timely training and dissemination of guidance materials to all Committee Members. 	<p>March 2018</p> <p>Sept 2017</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTP cases are managed and progressed within the Key Performance Indicators. • Audit process mainstreamed. Outcomes and findings inform continuous improvement plans for Fitness to Practise process. • Fair, balanced, evidence-based decision making occurs.

Develop the Social Work and Social Care Workforce

Over the next four years, we will –

- Promote and enable a culture of continuous learning and development in social work through the Professional in Practice framework.
- Work in partnership with stakeholders to create a learning and improvement framework to ensure the social care workforce is skilled, confident and competent.

This will produce the following outcomes by 2020/21 –

1. Social workers are competent, compassionate, values led, confident and skilled in their practice

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop an additional Award within the PiP Framework to recognise achievement at doctoral level. 	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers with or working towards doctorates will have access to professional recognition for their achievement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will extend the range of assessment routes for achievement of the PiP Awards. 	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement within the PiP Framework is more accessible, flexible and relevant to the CPD needs of all social workers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will use the findings arising from the 2016/2017 review of the Consolidation Award to inform a programme of work for continuous improvement of the PiP Framework. 	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the PiP Framework is evidence-based.

2. Social care workers will be able to respond and adapt to changing service needs in social care

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will establish a network of social care managers who will work with us to shape and influence the management and development of social care. 	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social care managers begin to form alliances and relationships with NISCC and with each other to support their own professional development and management of a regulated workforce.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will undertake a scoping exercise to inform planning for the development of a CPD Framework for the social care workforce that supports on-going learning and improvement of knowledge and skills. 	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NISCC will have an evidence-base to inform plans for the development of a CPD Framework.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will collate and analyse qualification data of our social care registrants to inform understanding of the profile of this workforce. 	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NISCC will have an evidence base that can be used to inform and influence the wider social care workforce planning agenda.

Over the next four years, we will –

- Use our sector intelligence, engagement, networks and alliances to promote a collaborative working environment that will enable fresh ideas and approaches to inform the strategic development of the social care workforce.
- Work in partnership with employers to strengthen capacity building to support and develop leadership at all levels across the sector as part of our agenda to deliver high quality standards in social care services.

This will produce the following outcomes by 2020/21 –

1. A systems leadership environment is created which provides for improved understanding and connection across the sector

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will organise two symposiums to discuss and debate key issues in relation to workforce regulation and the social care workforce. 	<p align="center">Oct 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The events make a constructive contribution to the debate on the future of social care and workforce regulation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will engage with Government Departments in relation to the Programme for Government to support the development of skills strategies for the social care workforce. 	<p align="center">March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC will have engaged with the Departments of Health; Economy; and Communities to identify appropriate strategies to support the upskilling of the social care workforce.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will contribute to the systems leadership approach to the implementation of ‘Health and Wellbeing 2026’ with particular reference to the Social Work Strategy, the Improvement Institute, Workforce Planning, the Review of Social Care and Quality 2020. 	<p align="center">March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC is making an active contribution to the implementation of Health and Wellbeing 2026.

2. Capacity is built to use collective intelligence to effect real, meaningful and positive change in social work and social care standards and practice

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will build our capacity to gather, analyse and disseminate data and workforce intelligence that will contribute to a body of knowledge in social work and social care services. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC has improved knowledge and data about the social work and social care workforce.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will work with key organisations to share data and intelligence to inform standards. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC will have engaged with RQIA to develop mechanisms for sharing data and intelligence about social work and social care practice.

3. The social care workforce and employers are engaged in the design and delivery of the system and feel able to effect change

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will facilitate and support the further development of the Workforce Development Partnership to provide a strategic overview of the challenges and opportunities for the social care workforce. 	<p>March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC has stronger links with employers in the social care sector. Employers in the social care sector work collaboratively to contribute to and influence the debate on the future of social care in Northern Ireland.

2. Increase confidence in the contribution of workforce regulation in serving and protecting the public, minimising risk and reducing harms by embedding and raising standards

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop our capacity and resources to implement the new NISCC Communications Strategy. • We will, through the implementation of the strategy, focus on communicating the key messages in relation to standards, registration and regulation and workforce development. • We will provide high quality customer services to those contacting NISCC for advice or support. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Sept 2017</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 2018</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications is a core business activity for NISCC shaping key messages across the social care sector. • Key messages about NISCC will be reinforced in the sector throughout the year. • Stakeholders will be efficiently and effectively supported to meet NISCC Standards or access NISCC services.

3. The views, experience and expertise of service users and carers in informing our business is valued and can be evidenced

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will ensure the views of our stakeholders, including registrants, service users and carers are included in the development and implementation of this Plan. • We will build capacity for service users, carers and registrants to be involved in our work. 	<p style="text-align: center;">March 2018</p> <p style="text-align: center;">March 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear auditable evidence exists demonstrating how our business objectives were informed by service users, carers and registrants. • The scope and capacity for service users, carers and registrants to work with us will be increased.

NISCC will ensure it has the right infrastructure and leadership in place across the organisation so that the resources available to it are deployed in the right way against our business priorities. These are set below –

1. PEOPLE – NISCC will be an employer of choice, and will employ, develop and retain hard working, skilled staff who are committed to delivering quality services.

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop a HR Strategy that will set out how staff will be recruited, retained, managed, and supported during their employment with NISCC. 	<p>June 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will be aware of NISCC’s position in relation to HR management, including staff’s own role, that of their managers and senior management.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop a Learning and Development Strategy that explains how NISCC will support learning and development for all staff which is equitable, fair and transparent. 	<p>June 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will be aware of how their learning and development needs will be met and supported to assist them during their employment with NISCC.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop a Health and Wellbeing Strategy that explains how NISCC will support staff in managing their health and wellbeing both in and out of the workplace. 	<p>Oct 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will have access to information to help them make positive choices to support their health and wellbeing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will carry out a benchmark exercise for NISCC against the IIP sixth generation standard. 	<p>July 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC will understand what it needs to do in order to achieve Advanced Stage IIP and how to plan for this.

2. RESOURCES – NISCC will deploy its resources within robust and accountable governance frameworks ensuring it delivers value for money over the next 4 years

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will manage our finances to achieve financial breakeven target of 0.25% or £20k (whichever is greater). 	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC's finances will be appropriately and properly managed in accordance with Departmental and Legislative guidance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will manage our estate at Millennium House and estate related assets and costs in line with our PAM Plan and Procurement guidance. 	March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC's costs in relation to its estate provide best available value for money within the terms of the lease.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will enhance the arrangements in place in relation to the management of all NISCC contracts, procurement, business cases and PPE's of all values. 	Oct 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are clear, proportionate and auditable systems in place demonstrating the sourcing, approval, and funding of each area.

3. SYSTEMS – NISCC will make better use of technology to develop and invigorate systems, including IT systems that are focused on those who use its services and can enable staff to focus on front line services

What we will do in 2017/18 to support this outcome:	When we will do this by	What the impact will be by March 2018:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will maximise and manage the functionality of the current system to ensure its accessibility and availability. 	<p>Jan 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current system is available to support NISCC's business.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will improve the sustainability and accessibility of the Socrates ICT system based on a full system scope and completed FitGap exercise. 	<p>Jan 2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more efficient and effective system for registrants, employers, key stakeholders and staff will be in place which will enable NISCC to demonstrate from 2018/19 an increase in users' satisfaction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will carry out an exercise to identify areas within our systems and processes which could be improved/ streamlined as part of a three year programme to ensure resources are used to support front line services. 	<p>Oct 2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NISCC will be in a position to develop a transformation programme for its systems and processes to ensure it is effectively using the resources available to it.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2017/18

STANDARD ONE – NISCC STANDARDS

NISCC will put standards at the heart of social work and social care practice both in relation to practice and education and training

Key Performance Indicators

1. We will deliver a minimum of 6 engagement events with service users to enhance the understanding of the Standards.

STANDARD TWO – REGULATION

NISCC will regulate the workforce and social work education and training

Key Performance Indicators

1. We will process 95% of applications/renewals within 20 working days of receiving the completed application.
2. We will conclude the removal process for 95% registrants within 20 working days after the due date for unpaid annual fees/failure to renew.
3. We will update the register for all Fitness to Practise decisions within 2 working days of receipt of the information.
4. We will conclude 90% of Fitness to Practise cases within 15 months of opening the case.
5. We will conclude or refer to a Fitness to Practise hearing, 80% of cases at investigation stage within 7 months.
6. We will conclude or refer to a Fitness to Practise hearing, 85% of cases at investigation stage within 12 months.
7. We will conclude 100% of ISO hearings within 4 weeks of referral.

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8. We will conclude 90% of suitability assessments within one month of the case created.
 9. We will conclude 90% of Fitness to Practise hearings under the FTP procedure within 5 months of date of transfer.
 10. We will conclude 90% of Fitness to Practise hearings under the health procedure within 8 months of the date of transfer.
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STANDARD THREE – DEVELOPMENT

NISCC will develop the social work and social care workforce

Key Performance Indicators

1. We will increase the uptake of social workers using the PIP Framework by 10%.
 2. We will deliver a minimum of 4 engagement and networking events for social care managers.
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STANDARD FOUR – LEADERSHIP

NISCC will promote a collaborative leadership approach across the social care sector

Key Performance Indicators

1. We will achieve 85% positive feedback on our symposium events to open debate on workforce regulation and the future of social care.
 2. We will establish a baseline on our workforce intelligence in relation to the social work and social care workforce.
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STANDARD FIVE – COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

NISCC will deliver a Communication and Engagement Strategy to support all aspects of its business

Key Performance Indicators

1. We will develop a yearly Communication and Engagement Plan by March each year which will be delivered in the following business year.
2. We will increase by 10% the number of stakeholders reporting a positive experience of the NISCC.
3. We will extend our outreach to stakeholders by 10%.

STANDARD SIX – INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

NISCC will ensure the resources available to it are deployed in the right way against its business priorities

Key Performance Indicators

1. We will produce an annual Business Plan by March of each year and account for how we managed the business through the publication of an Annual Report and Accounts by June of each year.
2. We will ensure NISCC's Portal is available not less than 95% of time during the year.
3. We will manage our sickness absence levels to ensure they remain below 4%.
4. We will increase by 10% the number of staff reporting that internal communication is effective and that NISCC effectively supports them in the workplace, including in relation to their health and wellbeing.
5. We will ensure we achieve the minimum standard of paying 95% of undisputed invoices within 30 days and 85% of the 10 day prompt payment target in accordance with Departmental and Legislative guidance.

We welcome feedback on our Business Plan. If you have any comments or queries please contact NISCC's Communications Manager using our contact details below:

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