

Status of Advanced Practice Nursing

in the

Republic of Ireland

Date Updated: June 2017

According to latest census information, the current population of Ireland is 4,761,865 representing an increase of 173,613 in the five years from 2011. People are living longer and those aged 65 years or older rose by 19.1% during this period. The average age is 37.4 years with a gender ratio of 97.8 males to 100 females (Central Statistics Office, 2017). Health care is two tier system with public and private sectors. The Irish health care service like many others is trying to overcome many challenges while operating within economic constraints and the changing demographics which has seen a steady increase in demand for services (Department of Health, 2017).

Critical Mass

In August 2016 a total of 65,117 nurses and midwives were on the register of nurses and midwives. A Draft consultation document '*Developing a Policy for Graduate, Specialist and Advanced Nursing & Midwifery Practice Consultation Paper*' was recently published by the Office of the Chief Nurse which proposed a new model to support nurses and midwives to fully utilize the knowledge and skills of graduate, specialist and advanced nurse practitioners (DOH 2017). This policy aims to increase the critical mass of graduate, specialist and advanced practice nurses and midwives to enable the health service to address emerging and current health care needs. Based on the current workforce, this document proposes setting a target for 2% of the nursing/midwifery workforce at RANP/RAMP level as 2% by 2021 providing full episodes of care across services based on service requirements and needs (DOH 2017).

There are 220 RANPs/RAMPs on the Advanced Practice Division of the Register as of May 2017.

Protected Titles/Definitions

In the Republic of Ireland advanced practice nursing is defined as a career pathway for registered nurses, committed to continuing professional development and clinical supervision, to practice at a higher level of capability as independent, autonomous, and expert practitioners (NMBI 2017). The first ANP post was approved in 2001 in emergency nursing, with the first ANP being accredited the following year.

Prior to 2012 ANPs/AAMPs were accredited by the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery (NCNM). In 2011, the NCNM was dissolved and the Nurses Act 2011 provided for a distinct division of Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioners (RANP). The title is protected and those using the title of Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioners (RANPs) have met the Nursing and Midwifery Board's (NMBI) Criteria for Registration to enter the Advanced Practice Division of the Register. RANPs in Ireland are now working in acute, chronic, emergency, midwifery and primary care settings. Research has demonstrated conclusively that care provided by RANPs improved patient/client outcomes, is safe, acceptable to patient and cost neutral (SCAPE 2010).

Regulation

The regulatory authority for nursing and midwifery in Ireland is *An Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann* or *Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI)*. The Board is charged with the protection of the public in its dealings with nurses and midwives and the promotion of high standards of professional education, training, practice and professional conduct. They are responsible for establishing and maintaining the register of Nurses and Midwives. This includes processes and criteria for assessment and approval of programmes of education leading to registration. Divisions of the register include: general, midwifery, children's, psychiatric, intellectual disability, public health, nurse tutor, nurse prescribers, advanced nurse practitioners and advanced midwife practitioners. (NMBI 2017). The standards and requirements for Advanced Practice (Nursing) have undergone a process of review culminating in the recent publication of revised standards (see next section)

Currently, re-validation for advanced practice in Ireland takes place every 5 years post registration. The re-validation process for RANPs/RAMPs will be standardised with the introduction of the Professional Competency Scheme by NMBI. This scheme is currently being developed and established.

Education

Education standards and requirements for advanced practice have been recently revised and published in March 2017 (NMBI, 2017). The purpose of the document, *Advanced Practice (Nursing) Standards and Requirements*, is to guide the development of innovative, flexible and practice-orientated programmes that lead to registration as advanced nurse practitioners. The standards and requirements apply to Higher Education Institutions and their associated Healthcare Provider(s) to inform the development, delivery, and evaluation of educational programmes for Advanced Practice (Nursing). The process is ongoing with review of the standards and requirements for Advanced Practice (Midwifery).

According to NMBI (2017) professional principles and values form the basis of ethical behaviour, which guide each Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner's (RANP's) interaction with patients, colleagues and society. The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives (NMBI 2014) governs advanced practice nursing.

The academic standard and terminal award for advanced practice nursing programmes are at Level 9 (Master's) on the National Framework of Qualifications (Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) 2014) which was developed with national stakeholders and evolved from the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act 1999. Practice-based learning is not only mandatory but an essential component of the advanced practice nursing education programme. It enables learners to develop competence to become safe, caring, competent autonomous decision makers that accept personal and professional accountability for evidence-based, expert nursing care at advanced practice level. For further information see *Advanced Practice (Nursing) Standards and Requirements* (NMBI 2017) which is available on the NMBI website (see link below).

Prescription Authority

Prescribing is an extension of a nurse's/midwife's scope of practice, beyond the skills, competence and knowledge and individual practitioner possesses at the point of registration. Nurse and midwife prescribing of medicines has been in place since 2007 and is not restricted to only those engaged in advanced practice nursing and midwifery. There are over 1,000 Registered Nurse Prescribers (RNP) and

the implementation of nurse and midwife prescribing remains a key priority for NMBI to support the expanding role of nurses and midwives in Ireland (NMBI 2017). Specific education for Nurse Prescribing is required and has been incorporated in the education programmes for advanced practice. Nurse prescribing of ionising radiation requires additional educational preparation and has also been incorporated into the advanced practice programmes.

The legislative requirements/conditions for prescribing of medicinal products by nurses and midwives are laid out in the *Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) (Amendment) Regulations, 2007 (Statutory Instrument, (S.I.) No. 201 of 2007)* and the *Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations, 2007 (S.I. No. 200 of 2007)* and *Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations, 2016 (S.I. No. 9 of 2016)*. Nurses and midwives with prescriptive authority are prescribing a wide range of medications across diverse patient/service-user populations. Several documents guide nurses in the expanded practice of prescribing including a Collaborative Practice Agreement (CPA). A RNP must have a written valid Collaborative Practice Agreement with a Collaborating Medical Practitioner/s that is approved by the Director of Nursing/Midwifery/Public Health Nursing/Service Manager on behalf of the Health Service Provider in order for the nurse/midwife to prescribe medicines within their scope of practice at their place of employment. The RNP can prescribe authorized medications only (those that hold a product license). The CPA and other documents can be viewed online www.nmbi.ie/prescribing

Background Reading

Begley C., Murphy K., Higgins A. and Cooney A. (2014) Policy-makers' views on impact of specialist and advanced practitioner roles in Ireland: the SCAPE study. *Journal of Nursing Management* 22(4) 410-422

Casey M., O'Connor L., Smith R., O'Brien D., O'Leary D., Fealy G., McNamara M., Stokes D. and Egan C. (2016) Evidence review to inform future specialist and advanced nursing and midwifery practice. *Department of Health: Dublin*

Department of Health and Children (2011) Strategic framework for role expansion of nurses and midwives: Promoting Quality Patient Care. *The Stationery Office: Dublin*.

Elliot N.M., Higgins A., Begley C., Lalor J., Sheerin F., Coyne I. and Murphy K. (2012) The identification of clinical and professional leadership activities of advanced practitioner findings from the Specialist Clinical and Advanced Practitioner Evaluation study in Ireland. *Journal of Advanced Practice Nursing* 69 (5) 1037-1050.

Lalor J. G., Casey D., Elliott N., Coyne I., Comiskey C., Higgins A., Murphy K., Devane D. & Begley C. (2013) Using case study within a sequential explanatory design to evaluate the impact of specialist and advanced practice roles on clinical outcomes: the SCAPE study *BMC Medical Research* doi. 13: 55. *Published online* 2013 Apr 8 Available at: doi: <http://www.10.1186/1471-2288-13-55>.

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2014 b) Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Nurses and Registered Midwives. *Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland: Dublin*. Available at <http://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Code>

Web Links

Central Statistics Office

<http://www.cso.ie>

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland

<https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Current-Projects/Advanced-Practice>

<https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Prescribing-Standards>

Department of Health

<http://health.gov.ie/developing-a-policy-for-graduate-specialist-and-advanced-nursing-midwifery-practice/>

Quality and Qualifications Ireland

[http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](http://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)

Irish Association of Advanced Nurse and Midwife Practitioners

<http://www.iaanmp.ie>

References

An Bord Altranais (2010b) Practice standards and guidelines for nurses and midwives with prescriptive authority. *An Bord Altranais*, Dublin. Available at <https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Prescribing-Standards>

Begley C., Murphy K., Higgins A., Elliott N., Lalor J., Sheerin F., Coyne I., Comiskey C., Normand C., Casey C., Dowling M., Devane D., Cooney A., Farrelly F., Brennan M., Meskell P. and MacNeela P. (2010) An Evaluation of Clinical Nurse and Midwife Specialist and Advanced Nurse and Midwife Practitioner Roles in Ireland (SCAPE). *National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery in Ireland*: Dublin. Available at http://www.nursing-midwifery.tcd.ie/assets/research/pdf/SCAPE_Final_Report_13th_May.pdf

Carney M. (2014, updated 2016) International perspectives on Advanced Nurse and Midwife Practice, regarding criteria for posts, persons, practice and requirements for regulation of Advanced Nurse/Midwife Practice. *Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin*. Available at <http://www.nmbi/nmbi/media/NMBI/Publications/Literature-review-advanced-practice>.

Department of Health (2017) Developing a Policy for Graduate, Specialist and Advanced Nursing & Midwifery Practice Consultation Paper. Office of the Chief Nurse, March, Department of Health, Dublin. Available at <http://health.gov.ie/developing-a-policy-for-graduate-specialist-and-advanced-nursing-midwifery-practice/>

Medicinal Products (Prescription and Control of Supply) (Amendment) Regulations 2007. Statutory Instruments No. 201 of 2007. Stationery Office, Dublin. *Medicinal Products (Control Of Advertising) Regulations 2007* SI 541. Stationery Office, Dublin.

Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations 2007. Statutory Instruments No. 200 of 2007. Stationery Office, Dublin.

Misuse of Drugs (Amendment) Regulations 2016. Statutory Instruments No. 9 of 2016. Stationery Office, Dublin. Available at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2016/act/9/enacted/en/html>

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2017) *Advanced Practice (Nursing) Standards and Requirements*. Available at <https://www.nmbi.ie/Standards-Guidance/Current-Projects/Advanced-Practice>

Nurses and Midwives Act 2011. Statutory Instruments No. 41 of 2011. Stationery Office, Dublin. Available at <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2011/act/41/enacted/en/html>