

2025-2028

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The vision for our culture transformation

Vision statement: One NMC: Create a positive, empowering and inclusive culture for everyone regardless of their background or characteristics, underpinned by a strong anti-racist ethos and a commitment to improve the experience for the public and nursing and midwifery professionals.

Case for change: Impact of new culture: Higher morale, better performance - including fitness to practise, and improved outcomes for the public, registrants and employees.

Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI): To ensure fair outcomes for the public, registrants and employees, regardless of their background or characteristics.

Action plan: A set of commitments and measures.

Design principle: To help the NMC work in a less hierarchical way and at faster pace.

Approach to culture change: Iterative project delivery, role-modelling continuous improvement and promoting employee voice.

In July 2024, we published an independent review into the NMC's culture, led by Nazir Afzal OBE and Rise Associates. We commissioned the report in response to allegations of racism, bullying and a culture in which colleagues were afraid to speak up and voice their concerns.

Over 1,000 current and former NMC colleagues, and more than 200 panel members who sit on fitness to practise hearings, shared their lived experiences. We thank them for doing so.

The Independent Culture Review (ICR) found a link between our regulatory performance and our culture. In particular, the continuing challenges with the fitness to practise caseload have put some of our people under immense pressure, as well as contributing to the stress of those caught up in these processes.

The report also found that two NMC colleagues might pass each other in a corridor with experiences that are worlds apart: one may be on an upward career trajectory, highly motivated and satisfied with their work; the other may be subjected to racism, discrimination and bullying.

When these issues have been raised in the past, we haven't taken enough action to address them and hold people to account. Racism, discrimination and bullying should never have any place at the NMC.



Listening events

On joining the NMC as Interim Chief Executive and Registrar in January 2025, Paul Rees hosted seven listening events attended by 770 of our 1,300 colleagues – with six in-person consultations across our various sites, and one online.

The feedback from staff has helped shape our Culture Transformation Plan.

During the listening events, some colleagues described how they loved their jobs and enjoyed working for the NMC.

But others spoke about:

- Experiences of racism and bullying
- An organisation that was too hierarchical and bureaucratic, and too slow to respond
- Feeling less respected than other groups of staff
- Feeling left out due to which office location they were based at
- How difficult it was to make their voices heard.



Building a new culture

The NMC Culture Transformation Plan, a comprehensive three-year programme, attempts to bring about a root-and-branch change in our organisational culture. We want to build a culture that is positive, empowering and inclusive for all staff, regardless of their background or characteristics – with everyone feeling that they belong.

We want to build a new culture at the organisation because it is morally the right thing to do.

We also want to do this because an organisation that has a positive culture, where staff feel valued, included and listened to, will have a team that is more engaged, with higher morale. Such a team will deliver better results.

A good workplace culture at the NMC will:

- Empower managers to be better leaders of the NMC's people
- Drive higher morale, better performance and improved outcomes
- Help the NMC to reduce the fitness to practise caseload through higher productivity
- Enable the NMC to better regulate and support nursing and midwifery professionals, and therefore better protect the public
- Ensure staff experience improves, with employees enjoying working in an inclusive organisation where success is celebrated, poor performance is rooted out, and people can be themselves at work.



Introducing a coaching culture

The culture transformation plan will be based on six pillars:

- Strong and effective leadership
- Values-based decision-making
- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- Ensuring psychological safety
- Enjoying work, and
- Regulatory Fairness.

Using these pillars as a framework, we will introduce a culture of coaching to the NMC.

We will have, as partners, five coaches who are experts in strong and effective leadership, values-based decision-making, embedding equality, diversity and inclusion, ensuring psychological safety, and helping staff teams enjoy their work. They will coach our managers on a regular basis and help equip them to become leaders who can transform our culture.

The lessons we learn from the five coaches, along with the expert knowledge we have on regulation within the organisation, will enable us to deliver greater regulatory fairness.

The coaches will join our Culture Transformation Steering Group, which will meet from April 2025. The group will be co-chaired by our Interim Chief Executive and Registrar and our Interim Executive Director of People and Culture. It will be made up of people from across the organisation, at different grades, from different sites, with a variety of backgrounds and characteristics – with a direct link to Council, via our Special Adviser to Council, who will attend group meetings.



Continuous improvement

The plan will also lead to the rolling out of new strategies to promote race and gender equity for staff and race equity for registrants.

It will tackle the hierarchical and bureaucratic nature of the organisation by giving more junior staff direct routes to raise issues with senior management.

The plan will build on the progress made at the NMC since the publication of the Independent Culture Review, including:

- The introduction of an independent 'Empowered to Speak Up' guardian
- The appointment of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion experts to review our EDI learning and policies, and
- More resources for learning and development and a more robust behaviour framework for performance management.

The culture transformation programme will adopt an iterative, feedback-driven approach to delivery. We will role model a culture of continuous improvement, both in the running of the programme and in how we engage with our colleagues across the NMC.



A positive, empowering and inclusive culture

As the independent regulator of more than 841,000 nursing and midwifery professionals in the UK, we play a vital role in protecting the public and inspiring confidence in the professions.

It is our duty to ensure we have the best culture possible, both to drive high staff morale and a strong performance in carrying out our regulatory functions.

Through this plan, we want to create a positive, empowering and inclusive culture for everyone regardless of their background or characteristics, underpinned by a strong anti-racist ethos and a commitment to improve the regulatory experience for the public and nursing and midwifery professionals.



Sir David Warren Chair of Council



Paul Rees MBE Interim Chief Executive and Registrar



The culture transformation plan will be based on six pillars

- Strong and effective leadership
- Values-based decision-making
- Z Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- Ensuring psychological safety
- **Enjoying work**
- Regulatory fairness

Strong and effective leadership

Desired outcome

Leaders who are clear, transparent and supportive, fostering a strong leadership culture that respectfully oversees performance management and drives organisational success - with managers being held to account for delivering the new vision.

How we'll measure progress

- Completion of leadership training, development, and coaching programmes
- Frequency of leadership communication and engagement with staff
- Tracking staff sentiment in staff surveys

- Management Support: My manager communicates openly and honestly/My manager provides me with the support and direction I need to complete my work
- **Strategy**: The overall business goals and strategies set by senior leadership are taking the NMC in the right direction
- Managers' approach to performance management:
 I provide clear performance management in a respectful fashion, so that all my team understand their objectives and are clear about how they will be held to account

Values-based decision-making

Desired outcome

All leadership decisions are made in line with the new values, and staff - at all levels - act in line with the new values and behaviours.

How we'll measure progress

- Decisions are clearly made, in line with the new NMC values
- Roll-out and use of the updated behaviour framework, which is in line with the new NMC values
- Objective setting and appraisal conversations focus on adherence to the values and behaviours, as well as to performance against objectives

- Values: Your day-to-day experience of working at the NMC feels aligned to the new NMC values
- Inclusion: The NMC's new values drive a sense of positivity, empowerment and inclusivity in my team and beyond.

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Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Desired outcome

A genuinely inclusive workplace where equality and diversity are embedded in every practice, enhancing innovation and employee satisfaction.

How we'll measure progress

- Tracking of gender and ethnicity pay gaps
- Promotions rates for women and Black, Asian and ethnic minority staff are tracked and publicised
- Implementation of anti-racism initiatives
- Completion by all managers of equality, diversity and inclusion coaching
- Completion by all staff of equality, diversity and inclusion training

- Diversity: Diversity and inclusion and a diverse workforce is a clear priority at the NMC/I believe the NMC has a diverse workforce at all levels
- Inclusivity: People of all backgrounds and characteristics have the same opportunities at the NMC
- Non-discrimination: I provide clear performance management in a respectful fashion, so that all my team understand their objectives and are clear about how they will be held to account

4

Ensuring psychological safety

Desired outcome

A culture where every team member feels safe to voice their opinions and concerns respectfully without fear of repercussions, enhancing overall workplace engagement and satisfaction.

How we'll measure progress

- Timely delivery of 36 Independent Culture Review recommendations
- Tracking employee feedback/participation in consultation events
- Tracking staff sentiment in staff surveys

- Non-discrimination: I believe the NMC would respond appropriately to instances of bullying, harassment and discrimination/I am confident I will not be discriminated against at the NMC
- Organisational fit: If I experienced serious misconduct at work, I am confident appropriate action would be taken
- Freedom of expression: My manager cares about my opinions/Colleagues welcome opinions different from their own, as long as they are voiced respectfully
- Enjoying work: Higher staff morale

5 Enjoying work

Desired outcome

An environment where employees find enjoyment and pride in their work, contributing to high morale and better performance across regulatory functions.

How we'll measure progress

• Tracking staff sentiment in staff surveys, Glassdoor ratings

- Ways of working in my team: Team members have been consulted about which ways of working can be changed in order to make our work more seamless, less frustrating and more enjoyable (i.e. by removing metaphorical stones from our shoes). Our sentiment has been tracked so that the impact of these changes on staff satisfaction is clear
- Enjoying work: Higher staff morale.



Regulatory fairness

Desired outcome

Regulatory practices that are timely, fair and effective, ensuring the fitness to practise process is expeditious, person-centred and humane. We must also ensure it is as compassionate, transparent and proportionate as possible while protecting the public.

How we'll measure progress

- The timeliness of fitness to practise caseload is enhanced
- There is a greater parity of outcome between different ethnic groups
- Increased satisfaction with fitness to practise among stakeholders
- Greater equity within the fitness to practise process
- Independent Oversight Group report increased confidence in the NMC

We would like to see improved scores in response to the following statement in our staff survey:

• **Process**: I am part of a fitness to practise process that is timely, fair and effective, where registrants and all involved are treated as people not cases, where safeguarding risks are fully understood, and the public is protected

Year 1	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Culture Transformation Operational Leadership	 Culture Transformation Steering Group x3 Cultural Competence training Culture Transformation Network launch Professional Standards Authority(PSA) Independent Oversight Group (IOG) (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group x3 Assess progress against plan in Q1, refine Q2, plan for Q3 Culture Transformation Network meetings x3 PSA IOG (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group x3 Assess progress against plan in Q2, refine Q3, plan for Q4 Culture Transformation Network meetings x3 PSA IOG (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group x3 Assess progress against plan in Q3, refine Q4, plan Year 2 Culture Transformation Network meetings x3 PSA IOG (bi-monthly)
Strong and effective leadership	 Leadership coaching for Executive Board Face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) Face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching for Executive Board Face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board, Deputy Directorss and Assistant Directors) Face-to-face town halls at all sites

Year 1	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Values-based decision-making	 Hybrid working consultation New values consultation Behaviour framework update Employee feedback form launch Pilot values-based interviews (grade 8 and above) Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 23 Portland Place adjustments Embed new values Zero tolerance of bullying stance launched Roll-out of Round 1 of values coaching for managers Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board HR on all interview panels (grade 8 and above) Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 Hybrid working rollout All NMC Staff Awards (linked to new values) Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 Roll-out of Round 2 of values coaching for managers Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Roll-out values based interviewing (grade 8 and above) Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings

Year 1	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)	 EDI training: Fundamentals and Conscious Inclusion modules Finalise our EDI plan and governance using evidence to target disparities for professionals and colleagues including objectives for: Gender and race Anti-racism Registrant inclusion Promotion of EDI staff groups Enhanced EDI celebrate International Day of the Midwife and International Nurses' Day Respond to pending reports Empowered to Speak Up service reports to Council 	 Roll-out of Round 1 of EDI coaching for all managers EDI training: Inclusive Communication; Accessibility, Sensitivity and Inclusion modules EDI plan implementation Strengthen approach to equality impact assessments Enhanced EDI celebrations Review of Empowered To Speak Up process Assess requirements to reach Level 2 of the Disability Confident Employers' Scheme 	 EDI Training: Leadership; Policy and Procedures modules EDI plan implementation Enhanced EDI celebrations Empowered to Speak Up service reports to Council 	 Roll-out of Round 2 of EDI coaching for all managers EDI plan implementation Enhanced EDI celebrations EDI diagnostic for Year 2 of the EDI plan

Year 1	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Ensuring psychological safety	 Baseline assessment Roll out of Round 1 of Psychological Safety coaching for managers 	Impact assessment	 Roll out of Round 2 of Psychological Safety coaching for managers 	EDI reflective conversations launch
Enjoying work	 All advertised roles open to Edinburgh staff Identify facilitators x10 	 Roll-out of Round 1 of Enjoying work coaching for all managers 	 Implementation of Round 1 actions Standardisation and streamlining of reporting 	 Roll-out of Round 2 of Enjoying work coaching for all managers

Year 1	Q1 25/26	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26
Regulatory fairness	 New Code and revalidation guidance discovery phase begins Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association Meet Jabali Men's Network and other groups of interest Incorporate actions from fitness to practise work into Culture Transformation Plan Respond to pending reports 	 Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association Explore fitness to practise panel and management diversity targets in line with regulatory best practice Enhance fitness to practise case clinics 	 Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association Agree objectives for registrants' inclusion Launch new clinical strategy 	 Draft new revalidation guidance and new Code Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association Introduce Anti-Racist objectives to ensure equity in fitness to practise process

Year 2	Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27
Culture Transformation Operational Leadership	 Culture Transformation Steering Group (monthly) Assess progress against plan (quarterly) Culture Transformation Network Network meetings (monthly) Plan for Year 3 (Q4) Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Independent Oversight Group (IOG) (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group (monthly) Assess progress against plan in Q1, refine Q2, activity and plan for Q3 Culture Transformation Network meetings (monthly) PSA IOG (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group (monthly) Assess progress against plan in Q2, refine Q3, activity and plan for Q4 Culture Transformation Network meetings (monthly) PSA IOG (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group (monthly) Assess progress against plan in Q3, refine Q4, activity and plan Year 3 Culture Transformation Network meetings (monthly) PSA IOG (bi-monthly)
Strong and effective leadership	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) Quarterly face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) Quarterly face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) Quarterly face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) Quarterly face-to-face town halls at all sites

Year 2	Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27
Values-based decision-making	 Quarterly Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 Roll-out of Values coaching Round 3 for managers Quarterly Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 Quarterly Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 Roll-out of Values coaching Round 4 for managers Quarterly Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings
Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)	 Finalise Year 2 EDI Plan Empowered to Speak Up service reports to Council 	 Roll-out of EDI coaching Round 3 for all managers EDI Plan implementation 	 EDI Plan implementation Empowered to Speak Up service reports to Council 	 Roll-out of EDI coaching Round 4 for all managers EDI Plan implementation EDI diagnostic for Year 3 of the EDI plan

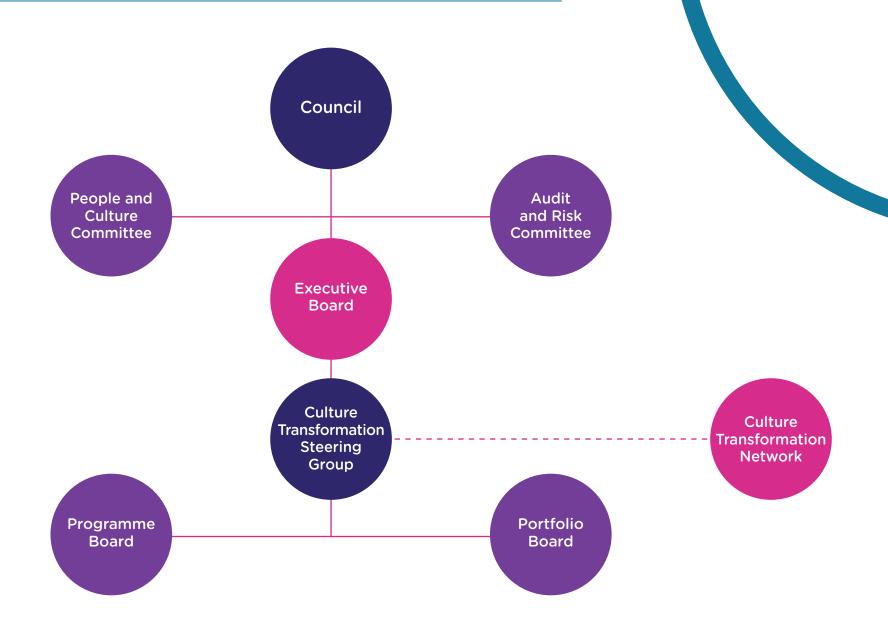
Year 2	Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27	Q3 26/27	Q4 26/27
Ensuring psychological safety	 Roll-out of Psychological Safety coaching Round 3 for managers 		 Roll-out of Psychological Safety coaching Round 4 for managers 	
Enjoying Work	 Implementation of Round 2 actions 	 Roll-out of Enjoying work coaching Round 3 for all teams 	 Implementation of Round 3 actions 	 Roll-out of Enjoying work coaching Round 4 for all teams (Q2/Q4)
Regulatory fairness	 Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association 	 Consultation on new Code and revalidation guidance Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association 	 Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association 	 Finalise new Code and revalidation guidance Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association

Year 3	Q1 27/28	Q2 27/28	Q3 27/28	Q4 27/28
Culture Transformation Operational Leadership	 Culture Transformation Steering Group (monthly) Assess progress against plan (quarterly) Culture Transformation Network Network meetings (monthly) Plan for Year 3 (Q4) Professional Standards Authority (PSA) Independent Oversight Group (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group (monthly) Assess progress against plan in Q1, refine Q2, activity and plan for Q3 Culture Transformation Network meetings (monthly) PSA IOG (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group (monthly) Assess progress against plan in Q2, refine Q3, activity and plan for Q4 Culture Transformation Network meetings (monthly) PSA IOG (bi-monthly) 	 Culture Transformation Steering Group (monthly) Culture Transformation Network meetings (monthly) Culture Transformation Programme closure and post implementation review PSA IOG (bi-monthly)
Strong and effective leadership	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board) Quarterly Face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) Quarterly Face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board) Quarterly Face-to-face town halls at all sites 	 Leadership coaching (Executive Board, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) Quarterly Face-to-face town halls at all sites

Year 3	Q1 27/28	Q2 27/28	Q3 27/28	Q4 27/28
Values-based decision-making	 Quarterly Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 Roll-out of Values coaching Round 5 for managers Quarterly Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 Quarterly Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings 	 Roll-out of Values coaching Round 6 for managers Quarterly Employee Forum meeting with Executive Board Bi-monthly Chief Executive-UNISON meetings Bi-monthly Chief Executive-Staff Network meetings
Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)	 Finalise Year 3 EDI Plan Empowered to Speak Up service reports to Council 	 Roll-out of EDI coaching Round 5 for all managers EDI Plan implementation 	 EDI Plan implementation Empowered to Speak Up service reports to Council 	 Roll-out of EDI coaching Round 6 for managers EDI Plan implementation

Year 3	Q1 27/28	Q2 27/28	Q3 27/28	Q4 27/28
Ensuring psychological safety	 Roll-out of Psychological Safety coaching Round 5 for managers 		 Roll-out of Psychological Safety coaching Round 6 for managers 	
Enjoying Work	 Implementation of Round 4 actions 	 Roll-out of Enjoying work coaching Round 5 for all teams 	 Implementation of Round 5 actions 	 Roll-out of Enjoying work coaching Round 6 for all teams
Regulatory fairness	 Finalise new Code and revalidation guidance Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association 	 Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association 	 Publish new Code and revalidation guidance Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association 	 Engage with Public Voice Forum, Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group, Professionals Strategic Advisory Group, International and Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery Association

Governance Structure



Culture Transformation Steering Group membership

- Interim Chief Executive and Registrar (Co-Chair)
- Interim Executive Director, People and Culture (Co-Chair)
- Assistant Director, Culture Change and Transformation (Senior User)
- Special Advisor to Council
- Secretariat and Logistics
- Expert coaches
- Registrant representative
- Assistant Directors from all Directorates
- Representatives from all London offices and Edinburgh
- Co-Chairs from all Staff Networks: BeMe; Parents and Carers; Workaround; Women; LGBT+
- Employee Forum representative
- UNISON representative

The six pillars of our culture transformation

- Strong and effective leadership
- Values-based decision making
- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- Ensuring psychological safety
- Enjoying work, and
- Regulatory fairness



23 Portland Place, London W1B 1PZ +44 20 7637 7181 www.nmc.org.uk

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