



NORTHERN IRELAND SOCIAL CARE COUNCIL

BUSINESS PLAN 2015/16

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BUSINESS PLAN APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) is responsible for the regulation and registration of the Social Care Workforce in Northern Ireland. It is an Arms-Length Body, sponsored by the Department of Health, Social Service and Public Safety (DHSSPS). There are currently over 22,000 people employed in the social care sector who are registered with the NISCC. One of the NISCC's key priorities is to work with the DHSSPS to ensure that all of the social care workforce are required to register – this would include Domiciliary and Day Care Workers. This will support the NISCC's overarching aim of protecting the public when using social care services.

The current financial pressures on the public sector in Northern Ireland apply equally to the NISCC and these financial pressures will be a key challenge for the NISCC as it aims to deliver on its statutory functions during 2015/16 and future years. The NISCC's Business Plan for 2015/16 therefore reflects the need to concentrate resources on protecting front line activity and core services while ensuring the NISCC breaks even at the end of the financial year. This will mean that some projects planned for future years will need to be revisited with a concentrated effort to do things differently within a very restricted budget.

The NISCC will be working closely with all its stakeholders, including Registrants, service users, carers and employers, during 2015/16, to ensure that it continues to deliver the right quality services within the budgetary challenges outlined in this Business Plan.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1 –

To improve the quality of social care and ensure a safe and social care workforce through workforce regulation

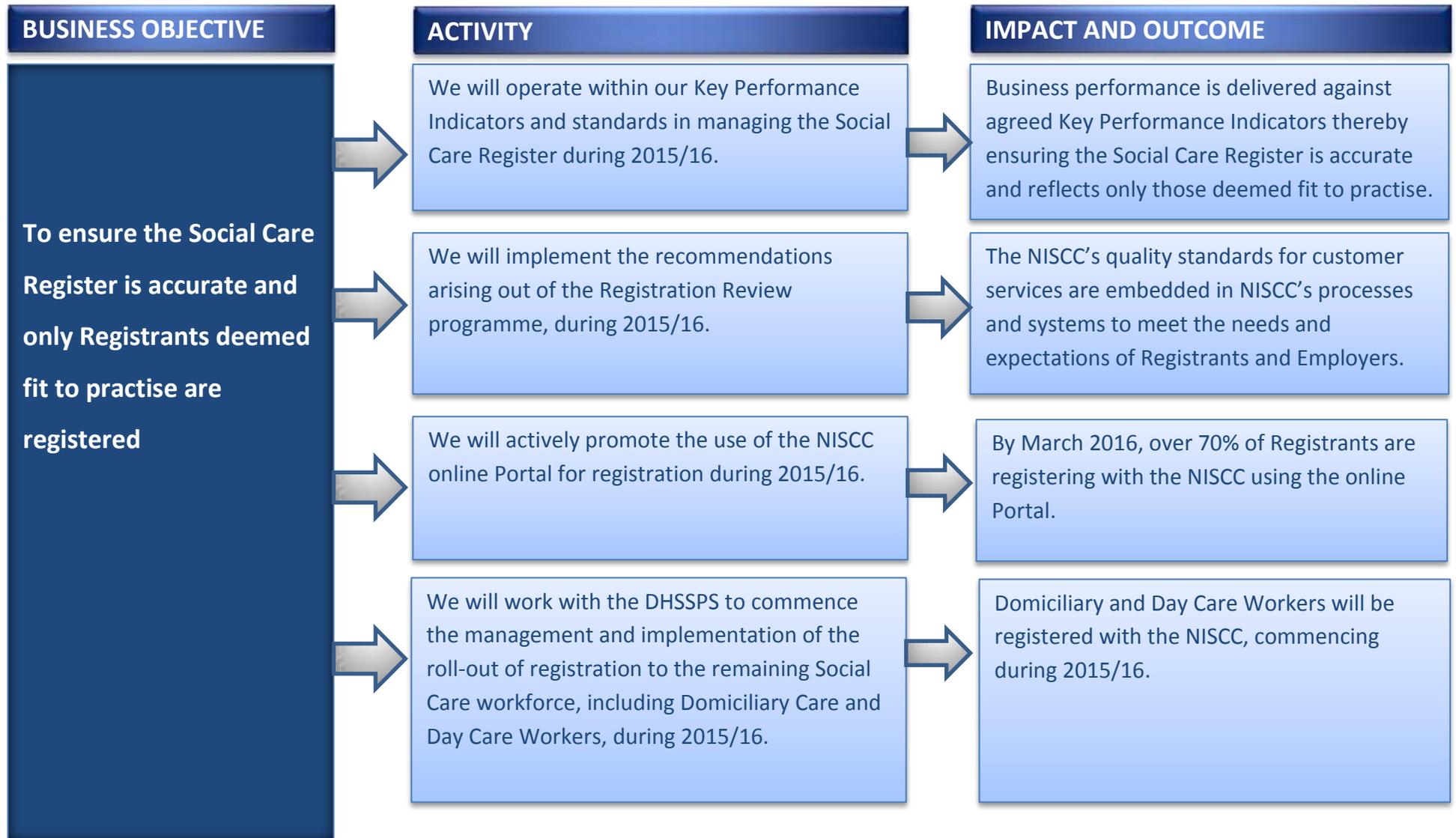
The NISCC maintains a Register of over 22,000 Registrants across Northern Ireland, including Social Workers, Managers of Residential, Day and Domiciliary Care, and Students studying for a Degree in Social Work. The NISCC is responsible for ensuring the Register is correct at all times so that a member of the public or an employer can readily ascertain whether a member of the Social Care workforce is registered and therefore considered fit to practise in their profession.

There are approximately 12,000 Social Care Workers in Northern Ireland to be included in the final stages of compulsory registration which will achieve full registration for the Social Care Workforce. The majority of these workers are employed within the Domiciliary Care Workforce. The NISCC and the DHSSPS are working together to begin the roll out of registration to this workforce during the business year 2015/2016, the period of this plan.

The Registration of the Social Care workforce is strictly regulated and the NISCC works closely with Registrants, Employers and other stakeholders to ensure the registration service it provides meets the needs of those groups, including exploring how best to maximise the use of modern technology while ensuring that our stakeholders are able to use our services in ways which best meet their individual needs.

REGISTRATION:

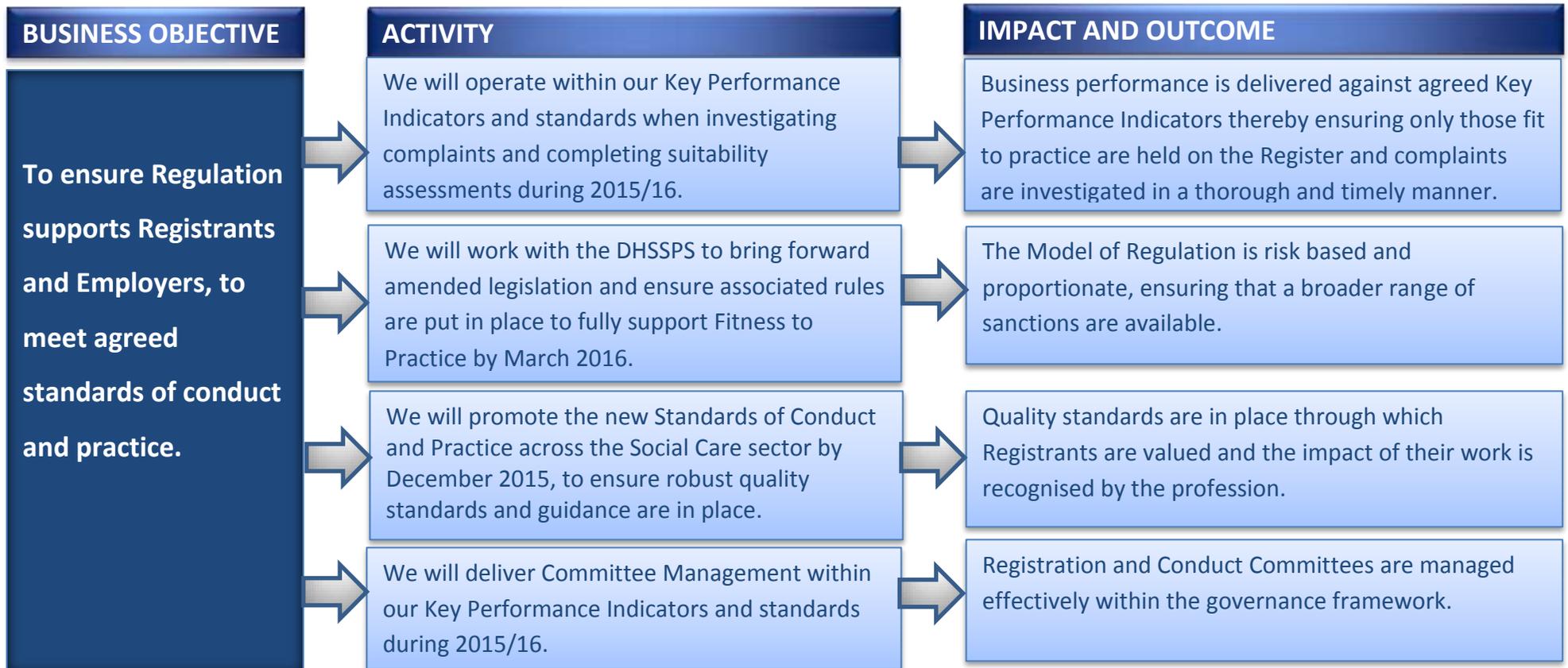
The NISCC has set the following business objectives for 2015/16 in support of its Registration function –



REGULATION:

The NISCC is responsible for the regulation of the Social Care workforce, including investigating complaints regarding the conduct of that workforce. The NISCC must ensure that those registered with it are fit and capable to practice in their chosen profession and to investigate where a member of that workforce fails to meet the high standards expected of them. This is an important public protection role so that those who use social care services can feel confident in the Social Care workforce who are supporting them. The NISCC has developed new Standards of Conduct and Practice for social workers and social care workers, in partnership with stakeholders, including service users and carers, to ensure that the Standards are suitable and measurable and meet the expectations of employers, service users and carers.

The NISCC has set the following business objectives for 2015/16 in support of its Regulation function –



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2

To ensure that qualifications and standards deliver a skilled and committed Social Care Workforce

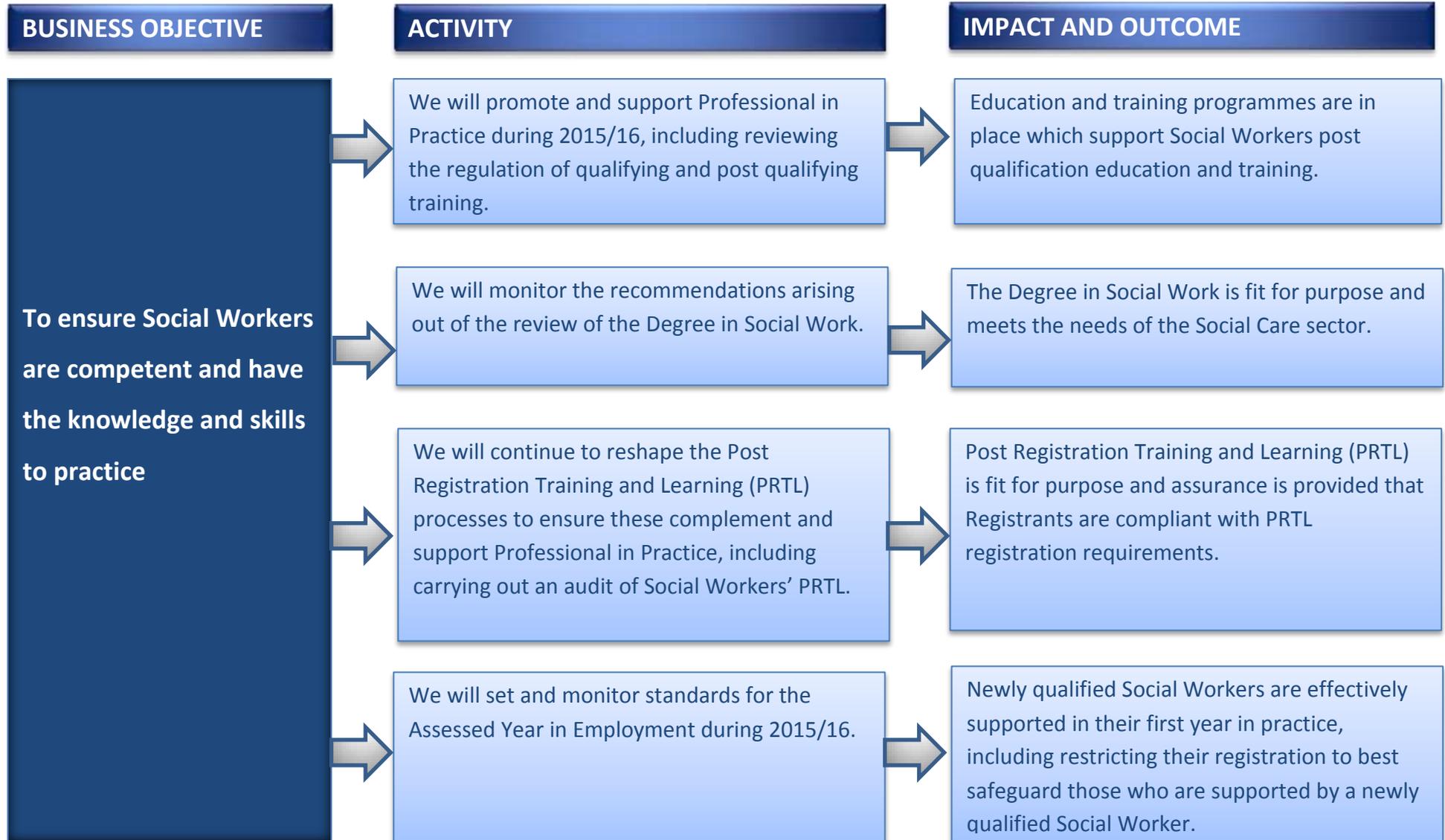
The NISCC has a statutory duty to approve and monitor standards of training for social workers at Degree and Post Qualifying level. Newly qualified social workers are supported in their first year in practice through the Assessed Year in Employment. The NISCC places a condition on a new social worker's registration until this assessed year is completed. Social Workers are then required to complete specified training aligned to the NISCC Professional Development Framework as part of PRTL for Social Work to consolidate their learning.

The NISCC is also responsible for standards of training and development for the wider social care workforce. This includes reviewing and developing vocational qualifications such as the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) in Health & Social Care. Workforce development, registration and the involvement of people who use services and carers, adds value to services and benefits the sector and makes sure that people can be assured of effective services from a safe and skilled workforce. It helps underpin the key policy direction contained in Transforming Your Care towards the provision of care in the community or at home; supporting choice, independence and dignity for service users.

Increased numbers of people are requiring care in their own home and they must be supported by a strategic approach to social care workforce recruitment and development and the NISCC is actively supporting the delivery of this work, including using new technologies and supporting workers who are lone workers and may be the only point of contact for a service user or family unit.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:

The NISCC has set the following business objectives for 2015/16 in support of its Workforce Development function –





STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3

To raise awareness and knowledge of the work of the NISCC and ensure its work is informed and influenced by users of social care services, carers, registrants, employers and other stakeholders

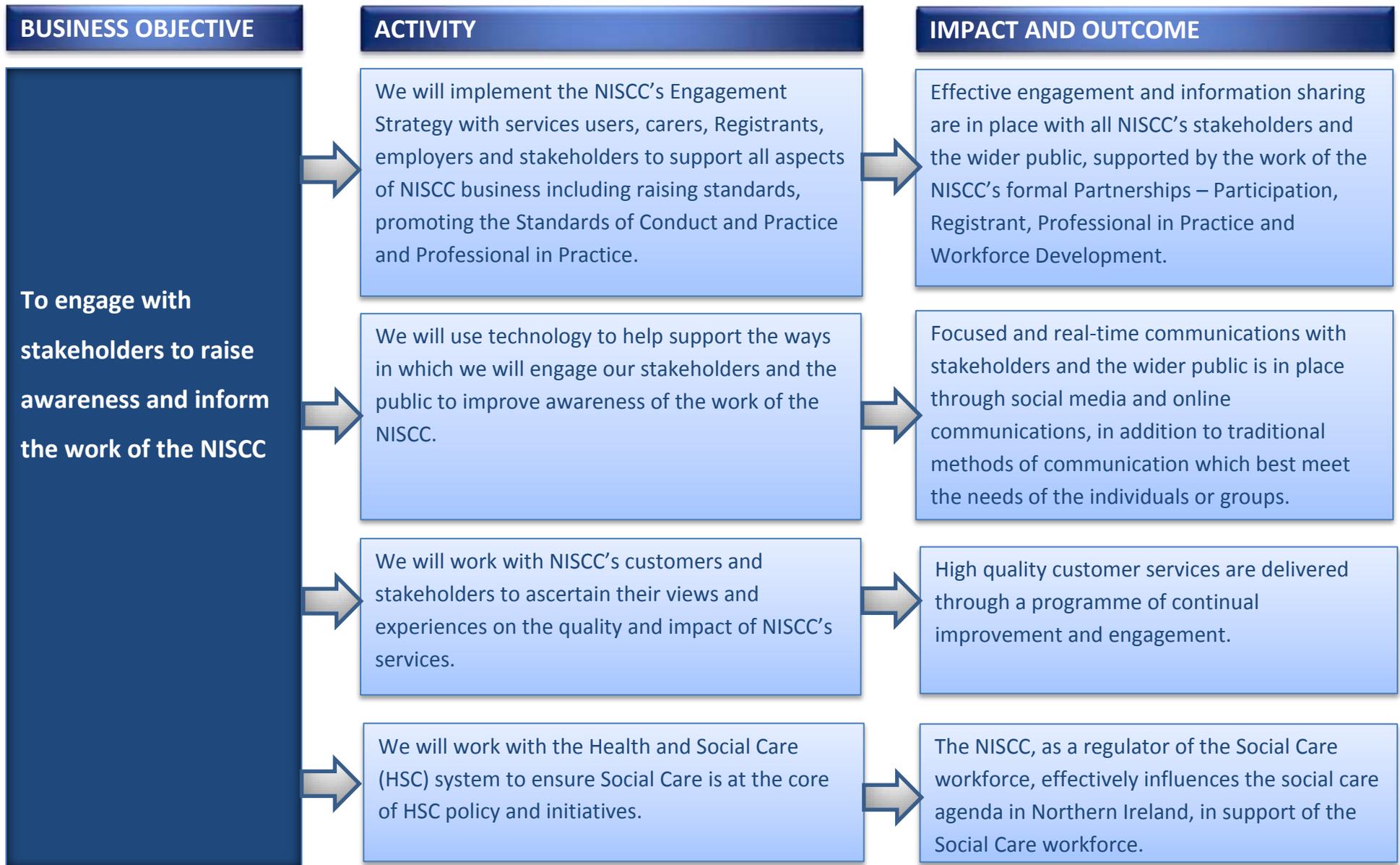
The NISCC's commitment to meaningful engagement and raising awareness of the role of the NISCC, and of the important Social Care workforce it supports, continues to be reflected as one of its three strategic objectives which NISCC has agreed at the highest level with its Department and Minister.

The NISCC will continue to ensure it promotes the excellent practice of social care in Northern Ireland and that the public, Ministers, local representatives and employers are well informed of the important work carried out by these workers, who, in total, represent 5% of the working population in Northern Ireland. [DN: check figure]

In addition to these commitments, the NISCC will be focusing on three key areas of engagement during 2015/16 –

- The launch and promotion of Professional in Practice – the new framework for post qualification training for Social Workers;
- The launch and promotion of the new Standards of Conduct and Practice for the social care workforce – the Standards describe the behaviours and standards expected of the Social Care workforce in carrying out their valuable work; and
- The further roll out of compulsory registration to the Domiciliary Care and Day Care workforce.

Each of these individual workstreams will require face to face engagement, information events and literature, together with on-going support and advice. The NISCC will be developing robust handling and engagement plans to ensure it is well placed to inform the workforce, employers, stakeholders and the public on how each of these initiatives affects them and, where relevant, the people they represent.



CORPORATE SERVICES

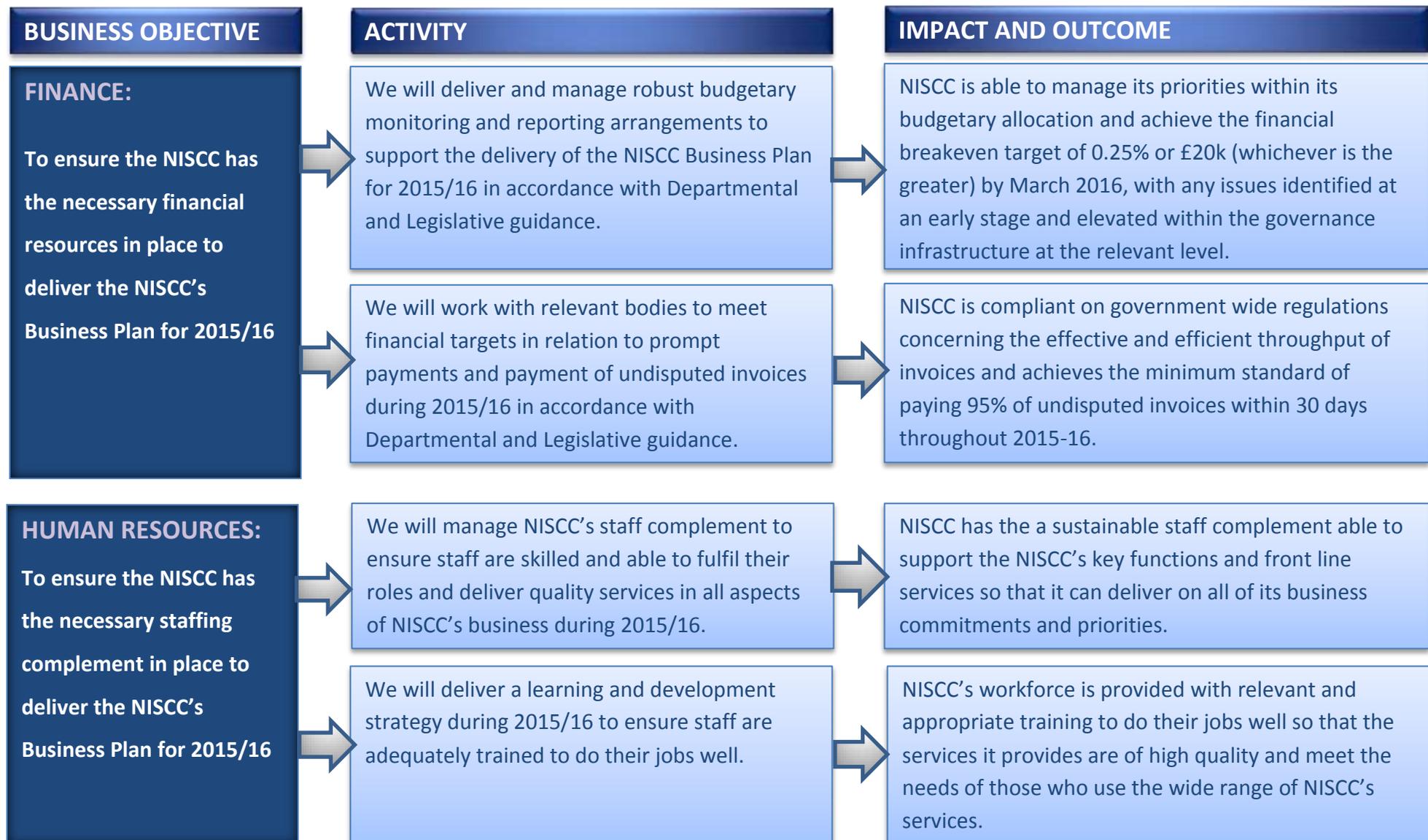
To ensure the NISCC has the necessary resources, people, governance and estates management arrangements in place to deliver its strategic objectives.

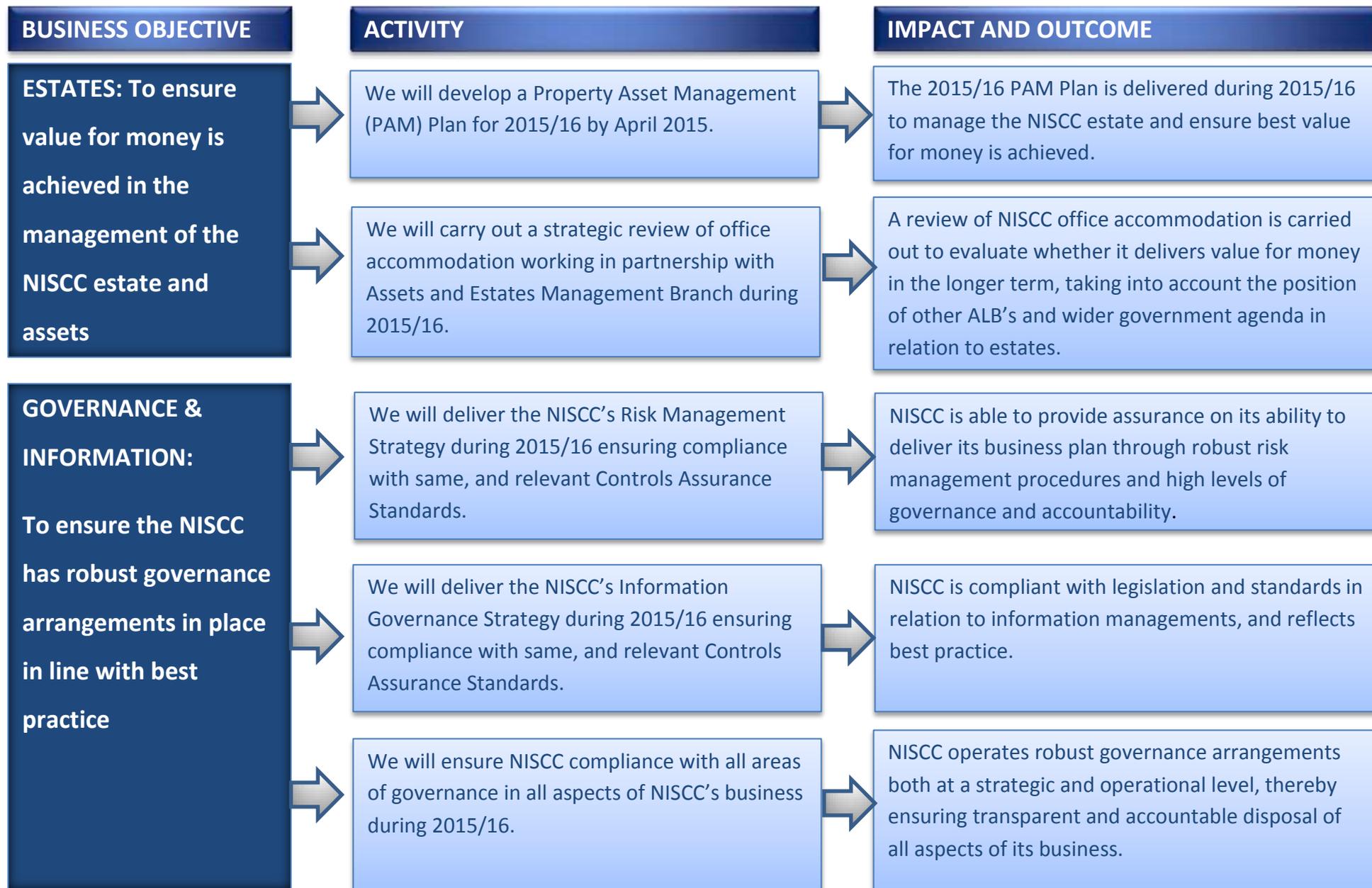
In support of its strategic objectives and core activity, the NISCC is required to have the necessary resources and staffing in place while ensuring it has effective and robust governance and estates management procedures in place that are proportionate, transparent and accountable.

In 2015/16, the NISCC will face the significant challenge of managing a much reduced budget from government and ensuring that the budget is appropriated to where it is needed most. This will require robust financial management on an on-going basis throughout the year and will require with the co-operation of staff, Council and stakeholders as relevant, while NISCC focuses on funding its core regulatory functions.

Operating within such a stringent financial operating environment, will mean that the NISCC must continue to ensure it has the right workforce with the right skills doing their jobs to the best of their ability to ensure excellent quality services are delivered throughout all aspects of NISCC business. The NISCC will therefore continue to invest in its workforce to ensure staff are motivated, skilled and capable of performing to high standards.

The NISCC has continued to demonstrate substantive assurance in its risk management processes and has a suite of work planned to ensure it maintains this, including in the areas of business governance, information governance and records management. In addition, the NISCC will under a strategic review of its office accommodation during 2015/16 to ensure its accommodation provides best value for money in the land and property market in Northern Ireland.







[April 2015]