

These notes refer to the Health and Personal Social Services (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (c.23) which received Royal Assent on 12 May 2016

Health and Personal Social Services (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

3. The Northern Ireland Social Care Council (NISCC) was established by the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001 to register the social care workforce.
4. The current model of regulation (a conduct model) for the social care workforce has been in existence since 2003. It is important that the system of workforce regulation is responsive to the modern context of service delivery and is informed by best practice. Employers have a responsibility to ensure that services are delivered by a work force that is fit to practise and subject to professional governance and scrutiny.
5. The primary objective informing the Act is to ensure that NISCC's regulatory systems keep pace with best practice in workforce regulation and achievement of awards in social work. The proposed amendments to the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001 seek to introduce a fitness to practise model and to provide NISCC with a greater degree of flexibility and range of sanctions for regulation of the social care workforce in Northern Ireland in line with other models of professional regulation across the UK. The proposed amendments also seek to address the current limitations in NISCC's scope to confer awards in recognition of achievement of standards of proficiency by social workers in Northern Ireland.