



PRESS RELEASE

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NMC launches new standards for supervisors of midwives

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) has today launched the publication *Standards for the preparation and practice of supervisors of midwives* at the British Journal of Midwifery conference.

The standards, which are UK wide, will ensure that all supervisors of midwives (SoMs) undertake the role in a similar way. This means that if midwives or SoMs move practice areas, their experience of supervision will not alter.

The publication includes standards for the preparation, appointment and continuing professional development of SoMs. They incorporate the competencies that all SoMs will be expected to meet both in preparation and whilst undertaking the role.

Commenting on the standards, Lynn Smith, Professional Adviser for Midwifery, said:

"Publication of the standards highlights the importance that supervision plays in protecting women and babies. They will act as a benchmark for both the preparation and practice of supervision of midwives across the UK. The NMC regards the contribution SoMs make to ensuring high standards of care for women and babies so highly that it will be noted on their register entry."

The *Standards for the preparation and practice of supervisors of midwives* publication will be available online at www.nmc-uk.org

ENDS

Notes for Editors

1. The NMC is the UK-wide regulatory body for the nursing and midwifery professions. The NMC was established under the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 on 1 April 2002 providing regulation within a single organisation in contrast to these functions being

undertaken by the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC) and the four country National Boards. The NMC maintains a register of around 682,000 qualified nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses.

2.The role of the NMC is to protect the public by ensuring that nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses provide high standards of care. The NMC sets and improves standards for the education, training and conduct of those on the register. It provides advice to registrants and considers allegations of misconduct, lack of competence or unfitness to practise due to ill health.

3. The establishment of the NMC followed the systematic failures revealed by the Redfern report into organ retention at Alder Hey hospital and the Kennedy report into children's heart surgery at the Bristol Royal Infirmary both involving doctors and, to a lesser extent, nurses. Both reports led to Government recognition that major cultural change was required in the health service and that modern regulation could contribute to that change. A significant aspect of the Government's desire for cultural change and modernity was that the professions and the public should be evenly represented on the Councils governing each health regulator. Within the Council of 35, the NMC has a voting body of 23 members, 12 of whom are registrant members and 11 are appointed lay members.

4.The Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 provided legislative powers for the NMC to approve and monitor the standards of educational programmes that lead to entry on to the register and the educational institutions delivering these programmes. The NMC establishes and improves standards through a number of key tasks, one of which is quality assuring nursing and midwifery education. Quality assurance is a planned system of procedures, audits and corrective actions necessary to provide confidence that standards of education and training are of the highest achievable quality.

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