

PRESS RELEASE

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Improving public protection – Regulator Reviews Code of Conduct

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is reviewing its rulebook for UK nurses and midwives.

The *NMC's Code of Conduct*, sets standards of professional conduct for UK nurses and midwives. The Code can and should be used by registrants who find themselves under pressure from fellow professionals or their employers to agree to unreasonable requests or to act outside of their qualifications. Nurses and midwives can also refer to the Code when standing up for their patients. The Code is not only for nurses and midwives but also for employers, nurse managers and directors. It provides the context for managing their nursing staff and explains their role in ensuring that consistent professional standards are maintained. Patient safety is a shared responsibility and employers have an increasing role to play in accepting this accountability.

Joe Nichols, one of the NMC's Professional Advisers, and leader of the project said: "The Code is an extremely important tool used to strengthen public protection. It needs to be as clear and concise as possible, without losing any of its rigour. We've made every effort to make this latest version easier to understand while continuing to be relevant to today's healthcare needs."

The draft of the new Code was agreed in December and the NMC will be holding a series of focus groups and seminars around the country. We will consult with key stakeholders including nurse and midwife registrants, members of the public and their representatives, and other key groups and organisations. The consultation opens in Cardiff on 17 January 2007 and will close in Belfast on 20 March 2007. Registrants and members of the public are also invited participate in our online consultation at <http://www.nmc-uk.org/aArticle.aspx?ArticleID=1951> from 22 January to 2 March 2007. Code seminars and focus groups are by invitation only and are scheduled as follows:

Seminars

Cardiff – 17 January
Newcastle – 27 February
Belfast – 20 March

Focus Groups

London – 30 January
Stockport – 31 January
Edinburgh – 1 February
Leicester – 5 February
Exeter – 19 February

It is expected that a final draft of the new Code will go before Council in July for approval.

Ends

Notes for Editors

1. The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the UK regulator for two professions, nursing and midwifery. The primary purpose of the NMC is protection of the public. It does this through maintaining a register of all nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses eligible to practise within the UK and by setting standards for their education, training and conduct. Currently the number of registrants exceeds 682,000. The Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (The Order), sets out the NMC's role and responsibilities.
2. For media enquiries, please contact Leila Harris Communications Officer, Press and PR, Leila.harris@nmc-uk.org or 0207 462 5884.