

Midwifery Strategic Advisory Group (MSAG)

Meeting held online (MS Teams) Thursday 18 September 13.00 -16.00

Meeting notes

MSAG members in attendance		
Name	Role	Organisation
Alima Ashfaq	Service user voice	MNVP England
Angela McConville	Service user voice	NCT representative
Arezou Rezvani	Consultant Midwife representative	Provider and LMNS clinical perspective
Benash Nazmeen	Midwifery and EDI	Association for South Asian Midwives (ASAM)
Caroline Keown	Chief Midwifery Officer	Department of Health for Northern Ireland
Clotide Abe and Tinuke Awe	Co Founders	FivexMore
Imelda Smyth	NI Service user	Patient and Carer Education Partnership (PCEP) Forum Queens University Belfast
Jacqui Williams	Senior Midwifery advisor (Education)	Nursing and Midwifery Council
Jenny McNeill	Reader in Midwifery Research	Queen's University Belfast
Julia Sanders	Professor of Clinical Midwifery	Cardiff University
Karen Jewel	Chief Midwifery Officer	Welsh Government
Kerry Phillips	Midwifery lecturer	Cardiff University
Kimberley Salmon-Jamieson	Chief Nursing Officer	Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust
Lisa Boat	Strategic Programme Manager	Swansea University

Lorraine Szeremeta	Chief Nurse	Cambridge University Hospitals
Michelle Lyne	Midwife Advisor (Education)	Royal College of Midwives (RCM)
Nafisa Anwar	Midwifery and EDI	Association for South Asian Midwives (ASAM)
Naomi Delap	Director of Birth Companions	Birth Companions
Rachel Best	Chair of Lead Midwife for Education Strategic Advisory Group (LMESAG)	Sheffield Hallam University
Stephanie Pease	Director of Midwifery and Nursing for the Maternity	Norfolk and Norwich University
Thomas McEwan	Principal Educator	NHS Education for Scotland (NES)
Tracey Fletcher	CEO	Birthrights
Tracey MacCormack	Assistant Director for Midwifery	Nursing and Midwifery Council
Verena Wallace	Senior Midwifery advisor (Policy)	Nursing and Midwifery Council
Apologies		
Name	Role	Organisation
Angela Graves	Head of School Healthcare, University of Leeds	Council of Deans of Health
Ben Wesson	Chief of Staff	NMC
Carmel Bagness	Professional Lead for Midwifery & Women's Health	Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
Clea Harmer	Chief Executive	Sands
Gwendolen Bradshaw	Professor Emerita Former Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Quality) Led the NMC midwifery programme standards (2019).	University of Bradford
Gill Walton	Chief Executive	Royal College of Midwives (RCM)

External Observers		
Name	Role	Organisation
Fiona Gibb	Director of Midwifery	RCM
Margaret McGuire	Registrant Council member	Nursing and Midwifery Council
Nadine Pemberton Jn Baptiste	Registrant Council member	Nursing and Midwifery Council
NMC colleagues in attendance		
Name	Role	Role in the meeting
Carole Haynes	Senior Policy Officer	Attendee
Donna O'Boyle	Acting Executive Director of Professional Practice	Attendee
Rakhee Mistry	Executive Assistant	Attendee
Sinead McKenna	Legal Lead, Legislative Change	Presenter

Papers

- Agenda
- Notes of meeting held 10 July 2025

Agenda items covered

1. Welcome from the Chair

The Chair of MSAG, Birte Harlev-Lam, welcomed everyone to the meeting, including observers.

Matters arising from notes of September's meeting

Chair has confirmed minutes as an accurate record of the meeting.

2. CEO update (Written Briefing)

- One year on from the Independent Culture Review, the NMC has embedded its 37 recommendations into transformation plans, completing 27 so far and driving major organisational change under new leadership.
- Fitness to Practise performance has improved - 71.6% of cases resolved within 15 months (August 2025), the best since March 2021, despite high demand with 559 new concerns raised in August.
- UK-wide survey launched on the future of the Code and revalidation that is on until end of 2025, led by Professor Sharon Arkell MBE to ensure standards reflect today's health and care challenges.
- Continued investment in equality, diversity and inclusion with an expanded 10-person EDI team and events such as South Asian Heritage Month to celebrate contributions and address barriers.
- We welcomed key developments including the Graduate Guarantee Scheme in England to support newly qualified nurses and midwives, Baroness Amos's national investigation into maternity and neonatal care, and the all-Wales maternity services assessment. We also reinforced our commitment to social care and international collaboration through joint visits and shared learning initiatives.

3. NMC / Midwifery update:

- Midwifery newsletter published 27 August - newsletters for educators, students, midwives, nurse and nursing associates, employers and stakeholders. Sign up here: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/email-newsletters/>
- Swansea report July 2025
<https://sbuhb.nhs.wales/files/independent-review-maternity-and-neonatal-services/sbuhb-mns-independent-review-pdf/>
- [Principles for supporting women's choices in maternity care](#) published 21 August, with positive stakeholder feedback. Co-produced videos and webinar launched on 8 September, document available online in Easy Read and Welsh formats.
- Midwifery Education Review ongoing with planned review of midwifery curriculum and student practice learning.
- Update on the Practice Learning Review Key lines of enquiry (KLOEs). KLOEs include:
 - Practice learning experiences of students with protected characteristics (including requirements for reasonable adjustments) and the relationship to retention.
 - Consideration of strengthening our approach to supporting students in practice/ SSSA including strengthening requirements for protected learning time for NA students.

- Evaluate key aspects of midwifery curricula to understand midwifery student practice learning experiences that support student attainment of proficiency standards.
- We are focusing on alignment with EU Directive standards and UK maternity review.
- We are aiming for all student midwives to support and care for no less than 40 women in labour and conduct the birth.
- Internship Model Proposal Consideration of a potential 4th-year internship model to enhance readiness for practice. The features could reflect Irish model, easing of placements Years 1-3, becoming part of the team, transition from student to employee and full cost analysis to be carried out.

4. Update from CMidOs – Wales, England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland

Karen Jewell (Wales)

Highlights:

- Budget approval has been confirmed for the national triage line project, in progress with Welsh Ambulance Service. Implementation planned for 2026 – 2027.
- Digital Maternity Record Rollout: All health boards to be on BadgerNet by March 2026.
- Bliss Cymru launch has been scheduled for 29 September.
- Elevate Training programme, will be launching 30 September. It's about supporting staff from global majority backgrounds.

Challenges:

- Ongoing Maternity & Neonatal Assurance Assessment, chaired by Professor Sally Holland.
- Bereavement certificates for under-24-week losses still unresolved.
- Implementation of recommendations from the Swansea Bay review continues.

Kate Brintworth (England)

- Independent Maternity Investigation: 14 Trusts confirmed, led by Baroness Amos.
- Interim findings expected in December 2025.
- Professional Strategy for Nursing & Midwifery: Consultation open; focuses on shared priorities digital, education, workforce, leadership.
- Recent reports published: Estates Review and Perinatal Quality Oversight Model (2025).

Justine Craig (Scotland)

- Nursing & Midwifery Taskforce: Implementation phase for 44 recommendations. Voices of midwives have been heard, and workshops have taken place.
- Maternity Standards Consultation has been launched and closes at end of November 2025.
- Work on cardiovascular health and home B/P monitoring for pregnant women is progressing.
- Student intake levels to remain stable for next three years.

Challenges:

- Interim CNO is off sick, new CNO start in November.
- There are financial pressures across health boards.

Caroline Keown (Northern island)

- **Challenges:** maintaining Focus on Maternity and Early Years, care pressures have dominated attention.
- Northern Ireland has shifted from being one of the strongest UK regions for vaccine uptake to now falling behind, this includes vaccinations during pregnancy.
- Work is ongoing to reshape public health messaging and improve accessibility of vaccines for pregnant women and new mothers.
- Healthy Child, Healthy Future Framework has been launched, expected go live date will be February 2026. Aims to support the first 2,000 days of life and strengthen links between maternity and child health services.
- The PHA's [Regional framework for midwives and obstetricians who support women requesting care outside of guidance in Northern Ireland](#) developed by the Consultant Midwife Forum, is to have a stock-take this autumn/winter to review the first 18–24 months of use.
- Advanced Practice in Midwifery discussions held with the Local Maternity and Neonatal System Lead Midwife. A regional plan is in development and is expected to be presented at the Strategic Maternity Forum in November.
- Governance and Safety contribute to the regional action plan, including Mary Renfrew's work and the ongoing Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) governance review.
- RQIA has launched a new Framework for Safety Culture within Health and Social Care for Northern Ireland. It is focused on engaging service users (women, birthing people, families), promoting openness and strengthening safety culture.

5. FTP rules consultation (Sinead McKenna presented)

- The proposed rule changes aim to support the NMC's broader improvement work by enabling the organisation to prevent delays within the FtP process, take prompt action at all stages, manage concerns and referrals appropriately, make consistent decisions and keep people at the centre of the process.
- The consultation will outline five key proposals:
 - Summary of Proposed Changes
 - Modernising How Information Is Served
 - Removing Rigid Response Deadlines
 - Clearer Case Management Expectations
 - tining Rules on Support for Vulnerable Witnesses
- Formal public consultation will launch in autumn, the consultation will return to the group for proposals. Feedback will be given before finalising rule changes.

6. The Code review

Code and Revalidation :

- Strengthen focus on digital/IT infrastructure and ethical use of AI, including clarity on appropriate use.
- Strengthen guidance on registrants' responsibilities with social media and online behaviour.
- Need for heightened awareness of professional standards and behaviour
- The Four Ps provide a useful anchor for applying and navigating the Code:
 - Prioritise people
 - Practise effectively
 - Preserve safety
 - Promote professionalism and trust
- Explore whether certain elements of the Code are more often linked to FTP concerns, to understand where registrants struggle.
- Modernise the Code while keeping its core principles.
- Acknowledge grey areas around AI and social media; need clearer guidance to help registrants act professionally in modern contexts.

Delegation:

- Delegation in the Code needs to be strengthened so registrants clearly understand their responsibility after a task has been delegate

- Concern that assumptions are made about what qualified/registered individuals can and cannot do.
- The Code should not enable dilution of midwifery, nursing, or nursing associate roles as distinct professions.
- Clarification needed on whether involving caregivers or family members is delegation or partnership working, as delegation implies confidence in skills/knowledge.
- Current wording (“people” or “persons”) feels too broad and may be inappropriate.
- Delegation to students should be considered, as some report being “counted in the numbers” and asked to perform tasks without supervision.
- Midwives are also increasingly asked to take on delegated tasks from other professionals, linked to the expansion of advanced practice roles.
- Suggestion that delegation could also be withdrawn where necessary, for patient safety.

Closing remarks

- The Chair closed the meeting, thanking members for a valuable and in-depth discussion.

Next meeting:

- Tuesday 2 December (**in person** at 23 Portland place)

2026 MSAG meeting dates:

- Thursday 12 March 10.00 - 13.00 (On teams)
- Wednesday 10 June 13.00 – 16.00 (On teams)
- Wednesday 16 September 10.00 – 13.00 (On teams)
- Tuesday 1 December 11.00 – 15.00 (In person)