

Midwifery Panel

Date: 3 June 2021

Time: 14:00-17:00

via GoToMeeting

Meeting notes

Present

Name	Title
Andrea Sutcliffe CBE Dale Spence Dr Anna van der Gaag CBE Dr Janet Hirst	Chief Executive and Registrar, NMC Midwifery Officer, Department of Health NI Chair Head of the School of Healthcare, University of Leeds
Gabrielle Jones Elizabeth Faircliffe Sue West	Stakeholder Relations Manager, NMC Events Manager in Communications, NMC Senior Nursing Education Adviser in Executive Team ESP, NMC
Gill Walton Jacqui Williams Nicky Clark	Chief Executive, Royal College of Midwives Senior Midwifery Adviser (Education), NMC Chair of Lead Midwives for Education Strategic Reference Group
Professor Geraldine Walters CBE	Executive Director Professional Practice, NMC
Professor Gwendolen Bradshaw	Professor in Health Service Education at the University of Bradford
Professor Mary Renfrew FRSE	Professor of Mother and Infant Health, University of Dundee
Sascha Wells-Munro Verena Wallace MBE Lord Willis of Knaresborough Cath Broderick Jacqueline Lambert	Maternity Improvement Advisor, NHS Improvement Senior Midwifery Adviser (Policy), NMC Member of the House of Lords Lay member Head of Midwifery and Professional Midwifery Advisor at the Scottish Government
Meava Kamtcheu Jane Maposa	Student Midwife, UoL Student Midwife, UoL

Handouts

- NMC Update for Midwifery Panel report (June 2021)

Agenda items covered

1 Welcome from Chair

- Anna welcomed attendees to the meeting, making opening reflections and outlining the agenda and housekeeping rules.

2 Update from Chief Executive

Reflections on the NMC's recent work, as outlined in the updates paper, and an opportunity to share thoughts and questions.

- Andrea gave an overview of key updates from the NMC Update for the Midwifery Panel document that was circulated ahead of the meeting, touching on the impact the pandemic has had on registration data of midwives on the NMC register as well as other key NMC updates as outlined in the report.

Comments and questions from panel members

- Women should be empowered through their maternity journey – how do we do this collectively?
- There are tensions between what the NMC as a regulator can do and contribute in this space, and what it is charged to do legally through legislation, that needs to be considered and explored.
- Evidence suggests that cultural and system change requires a collaboration between different organisations. Challenges at a more structural (at the core of the multi-disciplinary team)/organisational level are needed to find solutions.
- The NMC should not over-promise on what it is capable of doing and must acknowledge that it does not hold all the answers, hence the need for collaboration.
- There is a need for the NMC to explore how it can influence the system so that professionals can give their best and women can be empowered and supported, and have the best possible experience and outcome. This is an important role for the Midwifery Panel.
- Women also need clear information about their care options. Midwives build bonds with women and their families to improve the care given.
- Sharing the experiences of women and families are important
- Language barriers can prove as an obstacle to supporting women.

3 EU Directive Work

To explore whether our education programme standards should be changed following our exit of the European Union

- Gerry and Sue gave a presentation on the Programme Standards Review Project for the EU directive.
 - The EU directive is embedded within all of NMC's standards. The directive was developed in the 1970s and there are diverse views towards it and its use.
 - Now the UK has left the EU the NMC has the ability to make changes to education standards.
 - However, in order to make any changes to standards, the NMC would need to commission an independent review, undertake research and look at evidence, seek stakeholder views and eventually have a full consultation presented to council before making any changes.
 - Research is being carried out to look at which areas we may consider reviewing our standards. Outcomes from this expected to be made known early next year.
 - Emerging themes – Length of programme; Admission; Recognition of prior learning; Content theory and practice and practical training.
- Sue asked Panel members for their views and opinions this topic, particularly focusing on course structure and course content. Sue also welcomed input from student midwives present.

Comments and questions from panel members

- There were questions raised on how decisions will be made and the process involved. There was a call to create a 'thought-leadership' or 'subject-matter expert' group involved in the process.
- The panel felt that the Future Midwife standards represented the gold standard in midwifery. There was caution around making significant changes to the standards.
- The Panel were very clear that the Future Midwife standards should not be weakened in any way. This process would only look to make changes which strengthened the proficiencies and programme standards.
- Two areas suggested for further exploration were widening current access and addressing barriers to career progression for those in maternity assistant roles
- Concerns about the use of simulation include ensuring there is a multi-professional approach, the variation between simulation at AEIs, and use of

this method not teaching students the skill and importance of listening to women.

- Prior learning is important. Mental health nurses are unable to complete a shortened programme for midwifery training currently.
- Irish/UK border issues should be considered when looking at the standards as midwives and nurses can work in both jurisdictions.

4 Break

5 Improving How the Midwifery Panel Works

To explore practical implications for the Midwifery Panel

- Andrea introduced this item. The NMC want co-production to be the habitual way we engage with people. Andrea stressed the need for more diverse voices and reciprocity in co-production, so that everyone benefits from it.
- Andrea invited Hannah to talk through the next steps for the Panel:
 - Internally the NMC has already agreed a set of principles and definitions for co-production, which will be published on the NMC website and give a clear indication as to how the NMC is going to begin embedding these real principles; and there are a list of commitments setting out exactly how the NMC plans to do this.
 - In order to support everyone, the NMC will review the processes of how it sets up co-production groups like the midwifery panel so that it can set up further strategic groups. Hannah invited the panel to give their opinions on how the NMC could go about setting up these additional groups and membership policies so that they replicate the successes of the midwifery panel in other areas of work of the NMC.
 - Everyone on the panel will have an opportunity to feed into the next steps for the panel and more discussions on the future ways of working will take place in the next meeting.
 - There is a need to clarify an agreed purpose of the midwifery panel; and ensure membership of the panel reflects the purpose.
 - There will be a clear NMC lead for the midwifery panel to make sure things are more co-productive in nature.

Purpose

- The purpose of Midwifery Panel is to:
 - ensure that the expertise, experience and knowledge of midwifery stakeholders informs all that we do as we regulate, support and influence.
 - actively involve midwifery stakeholders in co-producing the NMC's work.

- enable the NMC to work together with our midwifery stakeholders, including professionals, partners and the public, to develop strategic policy and operational decisions, helping us support safe, effective and kind midwifery

Comments from panel members on the purpose of the panel

- Ensuring the expertise, experience and knowledge of midwifery stakeholders is vital to the work of the NMC. The revised purpose reflects how much the NMC has evolved in recognising the importance of midwifery stakeholders and the growth in the relationship between the NMC and midwives.
- The Midwifery Panel makes an important contribution to the strategic direction of the regulator too, so may be worth explicitly stating the strategic and operational work the members of the midwifery panel can get involved in.
- 'Evidence-based midwifery' could be added to the NMC providing 'safe, effective and kind midwifery'. However, this could have negative implications on inclusion. It is important that the purpose statement does not imply criteria for membership as the work of midwifery involves so many different people from different backgrounds
- It was suggested that the NMC could provide a diagrammatic representation of how the Midwifery Panel fits into the overall governance arrangements of the NMC as this may assist in agreeing the purpose and the level of challenge that should exist within the panel itself, in order to contribute to sustained success.

Membership

- o Hannah presented membership plans the NMC proposes to implement to successfully deliver the purpose of the panel and ensure it is inclusive and representative. She invited feedback from those present on who should be involved with the panel and how the NMC go about inviting and including other stakeholders.
- There was a consensus that people from different backgrounds and protected characteristics should contribute to the work of the Panel as well as all co-production groups of the NMC.
- The Midwifery Panel should encompass more researchers and evidence-based professionals who bring in different approaches and methods, and provide a key evidence-lens.
- Four country representation is important.
- It was suggested that the NMC should invite two additional members (i.e. student midwives) to each meeting to shadow the meetings as this could assist with capacity building.

Independent chair (Midwifery Panel Chair off line for this discussion)

- The NMC is proposing the appointment of independent chairs across other co-production groups it engages as the role has clear benefits.
- It was suggested that the Independent Chair has been the making of the midwifery panel, and that an independent lay view adds balance and insight to facilitate discussions.
- It was further stated that the role and responsibility of the chair is so important that it should sit with someone who is able, skilled and knowledgeable of the role that they hold as the chair.
- Having a lay person, who is independent of the NMC adds great value on top of that individual's skills, abilities and expertise on the actual subject matter.

Panel meetings

- Hannah advised that from 2022, the NMC is looking at holding four meetings as opposed to three each year, as well as exploring new ways to keep panellists updated effectively and efficiently. There is also a plan to update Midwifery Panel information on the NMC website.

6 Final questions or comments from Panel members and meeting close

- Anna closed the meeting, thanking all for their participation and contributions. She particularly thanked the contributions from the two guest student midwives, highlighting observations earlier on empowering women's education and grasping teachable moments, building relationships through continuity of carer and recognising and acting on language barriers. All of these contributions are so important to the overall conversation today.
- The next meeting will be held on 11 October 2021 at 14:00.