

Midwifery Panel
held at 15:00-17:00 on 28 October 2020
via GoToMeeting

Meeting notes

| <i>In attendance</i> | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Name | Title |
| Andrea Sutcliffe CBE | Chief Executive and Registrar, NMC |
| Ann Brown | Head of Strategic Communications, NMC |
| Anne Trotter | Assistant Director Professional Practice, NMC |
| Beth Lethbridge | Events Officer, NMC |
| Cath Broderick | Lay member |
| Dr Dale Spence | Midwifery Officer, Department of Health NI |
| Dr Anna van der Gaag CBE | Chair |
| Dr Janet Hirst | Head of the School of Healthcare, University of Leeds |
| Gabrielle Jones | Stakeholder Relations Manager, NMC |
| Gill Walton | Chief Executive, Royal College of Midwives |
| Dr Jacqui Williams | Senior Midwifery Adviser (Education), NMC |
| Logan Van Lessen | Consultant Midwife (Public Health) |
| Lord Willis of Knaresborough | Member of the House of Lords |
| Nicky Clark | Chair of Lead Midwives for Education Strategic Reference Group |
| Professor Ann Holmes | Chief Midwifery Advisor and Associate Chief Nursing Officer, Scottish Government |
| Professor Geraldine Walters CBE | Executive Director Professional Practice, NMC |
| Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE | Chief Midwifery Officer, NHS England |
| Professor Jean White CBE | Chief Nursing Officer, Welsh Government |
| Professor Mary Renfrew FRSE | Professor of Mother and Infant Health, University of Dundee |
| Sara Kovach-Clark | Assistant Director Strategy and Insight, NMC |
| Verena Wallace MBE | Senior Midwifery Adviser (Policy), NMC |

Handouts

- NMC update for Midwifery Panel, October 2020

Agenda items covered

1 Welcome from Chair

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

2 Update from Chief Executive

- Andrea gave an overview of key updates from the NMC since the last meeting, as outlined in the update paper shared with panel members ahead of the meeting.

Comments and questions from panel members

- Positive feedback shared about the Caring with Confidence animations. These have been used to support students.
- Request for NMC to share our submission to the UK REACH study.
- Question on what the NMC is doing on issues facing black, Asian and minority ethnic professionals. Andrea confirmed that the NMC is working collaboratively with partners to support other organisations' research, using the information we do have to start conversations and highlight what our information tells us, and reminding professionals that they can use the Code to support them.
- The panel shared their best wishes for NMC Chair, Philip Graf who is recovering from illness.
- Request for the next equality, diversity and inclusion report to separate the data for nurses and midwives.

3 Maternity services safety

- Sara presented an overview of the work NMC is doing in collaboration with our partners to encourage improvement in maternity services safety.

Comments and questions from panel members

- Feedback on the importance of involving diverse voices and students in this work.
- Question on whether the NMC will review revalidation processes in relation to safer maternity services. Geraldine confirmed this would happen as part of our routine work.

4 Midwifery in action at the NMC

- Verena and Jacqui presented an overview of work the NMC is doing to explore how to take forward our ambition to strengthen our relationship with the midwifery profession.

5 Discussion session

- Attendees split into groups to discuss the two presentations.

Maternity services safety

- Feedback from panel members covered a range of themes.
 - **Importance of the voice of women and families.** Panel members encouraged making better use of maternity voices partnerships, professional midwifery advocates and social media to hear from people with current and recent experience. Panel members felt this should involve those with a range of experiences, positive and negative, and must involve women who have experienced pregnancy, labour and birth.
 - **Involvement of diverse perspectives.** Panel members felt that it was vital homogenous groups did not advise on this issue. People who use services and professionals with different genders, socio economic backgrounds, ethnicity, disability and geography should be involved in supporting the NMC's thinking.
 - **Student midwives.** Many panel members suggested involving student midwives in this work as the future of the profession.
 - **Use existing evidence.** Panel members raised that there is a vast existing body of maternity safety research that should be used. The involvement of midwife researchers in the field of maternity safety was also suggested.
 - **Definition of safety.** Panel members noted that safety is more than just physical safety; the midwifery standards draw out more than this (i.e. including psychological, social, cultural and spiritual safety) because this is very important to women, their babies and families. Question about how much emphasis this work would put on this.
 - **The NMC's regulatory role.** Panel members felt the NMC could support the wider system through sharing information and trends coming through fitness to practice and education. The importance of reflecting the systems in all four UK countries was also raised. Feedback was also shared on the key role of revalidation in encouraging and supporting midwives to practice safely.
 - **Continuity of carer.** This was raised multiple times as an important issue for consideration, with panel members saying that there is lots of long-standing evidence on its importance but that it is rarely drawn into the safety discussion.

Midwifery in action at the NMC

- Feedback from panel members covered a range of themes:

- **Take a bespoke approach to midwifery.** Panel members felt that it was important the NMC reflected the differences between the professions as well as the similarities, so a bespoke approach to engaging with midwives is needed. Panel members said our language often combines the professions without always making clear that they are not the same.
- **Promoting the role of midwifery.** There was support for the NMC using its role to celebrate the role of midwifery and amplify the midwifery voice within health and care. The Council Associate roles were also raised as an opportunity to promote midwifery at Council level. Panel members suggested ways that examples of good practice could be gathered, including approval events, annual monitoring, and the national student survey.
- **The NMC's influence on midwifery.** Panel members felt the NMC could articulate more clearly how we add value to the midwifery profession through standards, revalidation and support to help professionals better understand our role and relationship with them. The importance of supporting professionals to be the best they can be was emphasised.
- **Importance of students.** Many panel members raised the importance of engaging early with students, who while not yet registered with the NMC are a group we should develop our relationship with so we can continue this engagement as they formally enter the profession as registrants.
- **Build on existing work and networks.** Panel members felt that the development of the midwifery standards laid a positive foundation upon which to build and the NMC should make more use of the networks it developed through this co-production. This should include relationships with women, babies and families to ensure they are always at the heart of our midwifery work.

6 Feedback from discussions

- The groups fed back to each other on their discussions, as summarised above.

7 Questions or comments from Panel members

- Panel members felt the meeting was not long enough for substantial discussions on both items. Future meetings will be three hours in length to accommodate longer breakout sessions.
- Feedback was shared on the new newsletter for students, welcoming this and suggesting the further use of social media to increase engagement with this group.
- There was a question on the timeline for work on the EU directive. Geraldine confirmed this work has started and panel members will be kept informed of any key updates.

8 Meeting close

- Anna closed the meeting, thanking all for their participation and contributions.

Summary of action items

| | Action item | Responsibility | Due date |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Share our submission to UK REACH study with Midwifery Panel | Sara Kovach-Clark Gabrielle Jones | When available |
| 2 | Look into separation of data on nurses and midwives in next EDI report | Sara Kovach-Clark | Ahead of next EDI report publication |