



Health care women should expect when they have a baby



About this easy read



This is an easy read version of a bigger booklet called: **Principles for supporting women's choices in maternity care published in August 2025.**



This easy read booklet tells you about the main things in the bigger one.



The bigger booklet is on our website:
www.nmc.org.uk/standards/standards-for-midwives/other-resources-for-midwives/principles-for-supporting-womens-choices-in-maternity-care/

About the Nursing and Midwifery Council



We are the **Nursing and Midwifery Council**. We are called the **NMC** for short.



Our job is to make sure all **nurses** and **midwives** in the UK and **nursing associates** in England are safe to work.



Nurses help people who are sick, injured or need care.



Midwives help women to give birth.



Nursing associates are health staff who work with nurses in England.



In this booklet, we are looking at maternity care. This is the care women get:



- When they are pregnant.



- When they give birth.

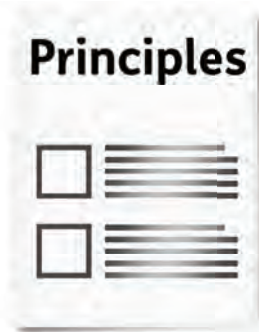


- After they have had their baby.

Principles for care and support



We want to make sure women and their babies get the best and safest care.



To do this, we have written some **principles**. **Principles** are a little bit like rules.



The principles make it clear what care women should expect when they have a baby.



They also make it clear how different people and organisations should work together.



This means:

- Midwives.



- Hospitals and other services who look after women and their babies.



- The NMC.



We have worked together with different people, groups and organisations to make the principles.

Women's choices about maternity care



Women can choose where they want to have their babies. This might be:



- In a hospital with midwives and doctors.



- In a **birth centre**. A **birth centre** is a bit like a hospital but it has midwives there. There are no doctors.



- At home supported by a midwife.



Midwives have the right skills and training to help women to have their babies safely.



Some women choose not to have a midwife with them when they give birth. This is called a **freebirth**.



Women who have a freebirth may choose someone else to support them instead.



This person may not have had any training to be a midwife.



They can still give support. But they must not give care or pretend to be a midwife.



We keep a list of midwives in the UK.
We call this list a **register**.



Only people on our register can:

- Call themselves a midwife

and



- Give pregnant women care as a midwife.



You can check our register to see
if someone is a midwife or not.

About our principles



Here are the main principles about the care women should expect when they have a baby.

What women should expect from midwives and their maternity care



You have choices about your care. Your midwife can help you decide what's right for you.



Women should expect things like:

- Being spoken to kindly.
- Getting information in a way that is easy to understand.





- Getting help to make a **birth plan** that is right for them.

A **birth plan** says what you want to happen when you give birth.



- Understanding how to contact their midwife.



- Feeling sure that they will get the support they need.

What midwives should do

Midwives should do things like:



- Keep women and their babies safe.



- Be kind and caring. Midwives understand that giving birth can be a scary time.



- Listen to people and explain things clearly.



- Respect people's choices and decisions.



- Understand and follow the NMC's **standards**.

The **standards** are like a list of things that midwives must do in their job. Following the standards will help them do their job well.

What hospitals and other organisations should do



Hospitals and other organisations who look after women and their babies should do things like:



- Make sure midwives follow the NMC's standards.



- Give women choices about where they want to have their babies.



- Make sure that people who support women to give birth are kind and keep women safe.



- Explain clearly what care the person can choose from.



- Be clear when a service cannot give a person the kind of care they want. Midwives must say:



- Why the service cannot give that care

and



- When they might be able to start giving that kind of service again.

What the NMC should do

The NMC should do things like:



- Make sure midwives follow the standards.



- Make sure midwives have the right training to do their jobs well.



- Look into any worries about midwives who are not keeping women and babies safe.



- Make sure people are not pretending to be a midwife when they are not.

If you are worried about your care



If you think the person caring for you is not a midwife, you can check our register here:

www.nmc.org.uk/registration/search-the-register/



You can also contact your nearest hospital.

You can contact us if you think that:



- The person caring for you did something to you or your baby that you did not agree to

and



- They were a midwife or said they were a midwife but you are not sure if they are.



Email us at:

registration.investigations@nmc-uk.org

About this easy read booklet



Easy Read UK has helped us to write this easy read booklet.

www.easyreaduk.co.uk



Kirklees Involvement Network worked with Easy Read UK and checked this booklet.



The pictures in this booklet came from Photosymbols, ingimage and the NMC.

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**Nursing &
Midwifery
Council**

The nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362).

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