The NMC Code
Professional staff, quality services

prioritise people
practise effectively
preserve safety
promote professionalism and trust
The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) regulates the 680,000 nurses and midwives who are registered in the UK. We have updated the Code of practice and behaviours that govern the professional standards your nursing and midwifery staff must uphold.

The revised Code is effective for all nurses and midwives from 31 March 2015.

This leaflet provides an overview of the main changes to the Code and aims to give you an understanding of your role and responsibility as an employer of a registered professional.
The NMC Code

Why it matters to employers

You are responsible for the safety and quality of the care provided by your staff. The Code supports this objective by ensuring that every contact, action and decision made by a nurse or midwife is governed by core professional standards and principles.

The standards by which nurses and midwives practise are key to the quality of the services you provide.

The benefits of the revised Code

The revised Code has been developed in consultation with nurses and midwives, employers, the public and educators, among others. There are many synergies with Codes that other registered professionals uphold, and this should support multi-disciplinary teamwork. Nurses and midwives who uphold the Code will help you meet your quality and safety goals and the revised Code aligns more easily with these.

The Code emphasises the need for nurses and midwives to:

- Prioritise people
- Practise effectively
- Preserve safety
- Promote professionalism and trust
The updated Code has important implications for frontline nurses and midwives, management teams and employing organisations.

**Key changes to the Code**
The Code is periodically updated to ensure it is relevant to current nursing and midwifery practice. This revision provides a set of standards that reflect changes in contemporary professional nursing and midwifery practice, as well as wider expectations of health and social care. Its focus is to drive continuous improvements in the quality and safety of care.

The standards have been expanded to include:

- A professional duty of candour
- A requirement to offer help if an emergency arises outside a nurse or midwife’s normal area of practice
- Ensuring the fundamentals of care are delivered effectively during all stages of life
- New standards on dealing with complaints
- Use of all forms of communication, including social media
- More detail about raising concerns and whistleblowing
- Guidance on effective record keeping
- Greater clarity on delegation and decision-making
- Guidance on prescribing and medicines management.

The Code provides the basis for how we assess the fitness to practise of nurses and midwives who are referred to us if there are concerns about their practice.
Revalidation – towards 2016

It is important that your nurses and midwives know that the Code has been updated and what those updates mean for them.

Understanding and reflecting on the Code will be central to compulsory revalidation for nurses and midwives planned for 2015 onwards. The Code will be a useful point of reference for embedding professional values and principles in appraisal.

Nursing and midwifery staff will value their employers’ support when they come to demonstrate their continuing fitness to practice. Every three years, registered nurses and midwives will have to meet requirements for revalidation to remain on the NMC register.
Next steps...

What you should you do now

1. Embrace the Code, and embed it within your organisation. This will help you to support the professionalism of your staff, and improve quality and safety. We recommend you bring the revised Code to the attention of your board or governing body.

2. Understand what the Code means for your organisation’s nurses and midwives and what they will be expected to uphold. You can download the Code from the NMC website at www.nmc.org.uk/code.

3. Incorporate the new Code content into your induction, training and professional development programmes.

4. Ensure you have policies in place to support your staff to uphold the Code.

There are more resources on the NMC website to help you promote the Code. You can find them at www.nmc.org.uk/code.
Thank you for your support