

# GUIDANCE SHEET

# REFLECTIVE DISCUSSION

## What is a reflective discussion?

One of the requirements of revalidation is that all nurses and midwives must have a reflective discussion with another NMC-registered nurse or midwife. In the discussion you and your reflective discussion partner will be linking your reflective accounts to the Code, so it is important that both of you are familiar with, and working to, the professional standards presented in the Code.

This discussion is designed to encourage a culture of sharing, reflection and improvement amongst nurses and midwives by:

- requiring nurses and midwives to discuss their professional development and improvement
- ensuring that nurses and midwives do not work in professional isolation

This discussion should be based on your five written reflective accounts, which are another requirement of revalidation. For more details of the revalidation requirements and how to meet them please see **How to revalidate with the NMC**. We also provide a range of supporting information about the requirements, including a video of nurses and midwives discussing their experiences of the reflective discussion, on our website.

In this guidance sheet we provide information both for nurses and midwives who are revalidating, and for nurses and midwives who have been asked to take part in a reflective discussion with another nurse or midwife as a reflective discussion partner.

## The purpose of reflective discussion

The reflective discussion will be most valuable to all nurses and midwives if you consider how you can benefit from it. Reflection enables you to make sense of a situation and understand how it has affected you. The reflective discussion should be a positive experience that offers both participants the opportunity to help each other to think about their practice and learn from others.

For nurses or midwives who are revalidating, it gives you the opportunity to respond constructively to feedback, experiences and learning. It also allows you to identify areas for learning and development, and to consider how you can put changes or improvements into action in your everyday practice as a result.

For discussion partners, if you haven't gone through revalidation yourself, taking part in a reflective discussion should help you to learn more about what will be required when you come to revalidate.

As a reflective discussion partner, you should be aware that:

- You must have an effective registration with the NMC, by which we mean that you cannot be subject to any kind of suspension, removal or striking-off order at the time of having the discussion.

- You cannot charge a fee for acting as a reflective discussion partner. It would not be appropriate for you to charge another nurse or midwife to act as a reflective discussion partner, as this might affect your ability to remain objective. It is the responsibility of both the nurse or midwife who is revalidating and you as their chosen reflective discussion partner to ensure that the revalidation process retains credibility, and to be mindful of any personal or commercial relationships that may create a conflict of interest.

## Before the discussion

### *Nurses and midwives who are revalidating*

The reflective discussion centres on your five written reflective accounts. These accounts should be based on instances of your CPD and/or feedback you have received about your practice and/or an event or experience in your practice, and how these relate to the Code. Before you have your reflective discussion you need to have written your five reflective accounts on the NMC form we have provided. You may want to share your reflective accounts with your discussion partner in advance.

You also need to choose who to have your reflective discussion with. Some factors to consider when choosing your discussion partner include:

- How well you know them: you might prefer to have the discussion with a colleague you work with regularly, or with someone you are less familiar with.
- Whether they undertake the same type of practice as you: you might find it more helpful to discuss your reflective accounts with someone who has had similar experiences to you, or someone with different experiences.
- Whether they are senior or junior to you, or at the same level: would you find it valuable to have insight from someone who has been working at a different level to you?

It is up to you to choose who the most appropriate person is, and you can have discussions with more than one nurse or midwife if you want to. However, please note that although you only need to record the details of one discussion, this discussion must cover your five written reflective accounts.

Part of the revalidation process involves demonstrating to a confirmer that you have met the revalidation requirements. If your confirmer is a nurse or midwife and you choose to have your reflective discussion with them, your reflective discussion can form part of the confirmation discussion. If your confirmer is not a nurse or midwife, or you choose to have your reflective discussion with a different nurse or midwife, you will need to have your reflective discussion before your confirmation discussion.

If your line manager is a nurse or midwife, you might like to have both your reflective discussion and your confirmation discussion as part of an annual appraisal, if you have one, but this is not necessary.

### *Reflective discussion partners*

Before taking part in a reflective discussion with another nurse or midwife, you should familiarise yourself with this and the other revalidation requirements in the *How to revalidate with the NMC* guidance.

You may want to ask the nurse or midwife to share their five written reflective accounts with you beforehand. You are not being asked to assess these reflective accounts as academic pieces of writing. They should be used as a starting point for the reflective discussion, and you might like to think about what lessons can be learned from these accounts.

You may also want to think of some questions you can ask the nurse or midwife about their accounts to help structure your discussion. These could include:

- What did you learn?
- What effect did this have on you?
- How might you change your practice as a result?

## During the discussion

The discussion itself is based on the five written reflective accounts. These accounts link real-life experiences to the four key themes of the Code (prioritise people, practise effectively, preserve safety, promote professionalism and trust). This is an opportunity for participants to re-familiarise themselves with the Code and gain a greater understanding of how it applies to your everyday nursing and/or midwifery practice. It may be helpful for both of you to bring your copies of the Code with you to the discussion.

You can use the reflective discussion in lots of different ways, for example:

- to share ideas, information and experiences
- to debrief after an incident
- to get another person's perspective on a situation
- to think about professional development objectives.

The discussion partner can offer a different perspective on an event or piece of feedback. You could help the nurse or midwife to reach a conclusion, or develop an action plan for the future.

During your discussion you should not discuss patients, service users or colleagues in a way that could identify them unless they expressly agree.

Unless the reflective discussion is part of the confirmation discussion, you do not need to consider evidence relating to other revalidation requirements.

## After the discussion – the reflective discussion form

### *Nurses and midwives who are revalidating*

You must record details of your reflective discussion on the NMC form we have provided. You need to record your name and NMC Pin.

You should keep the completed and signed form. You will need to show it to your confirmer as evidence that you have had a reflective discussion (unless your confirmer was your reflective discussion partner).

### *Reflective discussion partners*

You will need to sign the NMC form and record your name, NMC Pin, email, professional address including postcode, contact number, discussion date and a summary of the discussion.

You will also need to agree that the NMC can contact you if necessary to verify the information that the nurse or midwife has provided in their application.

## Please remember:

- The written reflective accounts, and the discussion summary section of the reflective discussion form, must not include any information that might identify an individual, whether that individual is alive or deceased. This means that all information must be recorded in a way that no patient, colleague or other individual can be identified from the information

The section on non-identifiable information in **How to revalidate with the NMC** provides examples of how to anonymise the written reflective accounts and reflective discussion form.

## After the discussion – the online application

### *Nurses and midwives who are revalidating*

As part of your online application you will need to declare that you have had a reflective discussion with another NMC-registered nurse or midwife. Please enter the name, NMC Pin, email, professional address including postcode and contact number of the nurse or midwife with whom you had the discussion, as well as the date you had the reflective discussion.

You will also need to agree that the NMC can contact your reflective discussion partner if necessary to verify the information that you provided in your application.

## The reflective discussion and other ways to reflect

• In order to meet the reflective discussion requirement you must have a conversation that is one-to-one with another nurse or midwife and that covers all five written reflective accounts. It is important that on the reflective discussion form you record the name, contact details, NMC Pin and signature of one discussion partner who is satisfied that all five reflective accounts have been discussed because we may need to contact them for the purpose of verification. We feel that this approach is straightforward, achievable and unambiguous.

Our reflective requirements provide a strong basis for you to develop a more reflective approach to your practice and we would actively encourage you to reflect on your practice in other ways.

If you would like to have reflective discussions at regular intervals throughout your renewal period, or would like to have reflective discussions with a number of different people (including as part of a group), we recommend that you continue to do this. You can record notes of these discussions in your portfolio if you would find that helpful. The reflective discussion that you have in order to revalidate can be used as a summary discussion of the reflective accounts you have written and the discussions you have had over the three years. You can bring reflections and actions from previous discussions to the meeting and look back at what you have learnt, as well as reflecting on anything more recent.