



LSA National Forum (UK)
Guidelines for the statutory supervision of midwives

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**GUIDELINE FOR THE NOMINATION, SELECTION AND
APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS OF MIDWIVES**

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Guideline for the nomination, selection and appointment of Supervisors of Midwives

This guideline sets out the principles for the nomination, selection and appointment of supervisors of midwives. The process will be open to all midwives with the appropriate skills and experience, in accordance with the NMC Midwives rules and standards - Rule 11 (2004) and the person specification, which is appendix 1 to this guideline.

A midwife who wishes to be considered for a place on a preparation programme must:

- be a practising midwife; and
- have at least three years experience as a practising midwife, of which at least one shall have been in the two year period immediately preceding the appointment.

The guideline has been agreed by the UK Local Supervising Authority (LSA) Midwifery Officers.

Rationale for nomination, and selection

Supervisors of midwives must have credibility with the midwives they supervise and with senior management within their organisation. They should be able to demonstrate ongoing professional development at a minimum of degree level. They must be experienced midwives, academically able, perceived as approachable by their colleagues and able to communicate effectively with senior management - in order that they may contribute effectively to developments in midwifery practice.

Supervisors play a pivotal role in safeguarding and enhancing the quality of midwifery care provided to women and their babies. There is no hierarchy amongst the supervisors of midwives within a maternity service and it is useful if the supervisors in a local team have a variety of backgrounds and experiences. This enables them to bring different skills and perspectives to the role and ensures a balance in the group of supervisors.

The evidence suggests that where midwives are fully involved in the process of nomination of prospective supervisors of midwives, they nominate those peers who they feel will meet the needs of local midwives (Stapleton, Duerden & Kirkham 1998).

Number of Supervisors

The number of supervisors required for each maternity service, to meet local needs, will be confirmed with the LSA Midwifery Officer (LSAMO). A minimum number of supervisors of midwives will be identified, in order to maintain the high standards and quality of supervision. Although the NMC set a maximum ratio of 1:15 supervisors to midwives, the LSAMOs recommend 1:12, to give flexibility to local arrangements and to allow for succession planning.



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Process

Advertising

An advertisement for the role of supervisor of midwives will be displayed locally. Applicants may apply to undertake the Preparation of Supervisors of Midwives (POSOM) course or to be reappointed as a supervisor through:

- Self nomination
- Peer nomination
- Nomination by others, e.g. supervisors, midwifery educationalists, midwifery managers.

Nomination to undertake the POSOM course

Midwives can self nominate, on the basis that a highly motivated supervisor of midwives is more likely to be effective and midwives may also be nominated by others.

If nomination is from peers or colleagues, this must be from more than one midwife. Both self nominated and peer nominated midwives will provide a statement in support of their application and also supply evidence to demonstrate which midwives support them.

Each nominated candidate will then receive information – from the contact supervisor - on how to apply to become a supervisor of midwives. The information provided will ensure that all candidates understand the role of the supervisor of midwives and are prepared to undertake the added responsibilities that the role entails. It will also ensure that all candidates are able to meet the requirements of both the LSA and NMC. As a minimum this information should provide the applicant with:

- NMC Standards for the preparation and practice of supervisors of midwives (2006)
- role description and responsibilities
- person specification

Selection

The local selection process should be transparent, equitable and democratic; a closed ballot system for example encompasses these principles. Those midwives who are successful in the local selection process will be invited to an LSA selection panel interview, on the basis that they will have reflected on their own skills and experience, against the person specification, prior to application. Unsuccessful candidates will be offered constructive feedback locally with supervisors of midwives.

Local arrangements should also be in place for the situation where there are more applicants for the POSOM course than can be supported by the employing organisation.



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Selection Panel Interview

The panel for interview will be led by the LSAMO and may also include; a supervisor of midwives in practice, the POSOM course leader and a service user representative. This will help to ensure that the successful candidate meets the required standards, both professionally and educationally.

The unit Head of Midwifery or a representative may also attend and if not, the LSAMO and/or local supervisors must have established - with the relevant people within the employing organisation - if there are any work or practice issues related to the midwife that need to be considered. There will also need to be confirmation by the Head of Midwifery that the service can release the midwife to attend all the Higher Education Institution (HEI) requirements of the POSOM course. Potential candidates must also have the endorsement of the local supervisory team.

The interview process will be robust to ensure that all candidates have an equitable opportunity; the panel will decide which candidates are selected to undertake the POSOM course. In order to finalise the nomination process, the appropriate documentation will be completed as soon as possible by successful midwives and forwarded to the LSA and HEI. This is because only midwives nominated by LSAs may undertake the preparation course.

Preparation of Supervisors of Midwives

Successful candidates will attend an NMC approved and accredited POSOM course, in accordance with NMC Standards for the preparation and practice of supervisors of midwives, Section 3 (2006) and the Midwives rules and standards – Rule 11 (2)(c) (2004).

Each student supervisor of midwives will have an agreed mentor at local level to offer support and guidance throughout the preparation course and afterwards. The mentor will also be responsible for assessing and signing off clinical competence during the course. Allocated supervisor mentors must meet the standard of an NMC sign-off mentor, as described in NMC Standards to support learning and assessment in practice (2008). Supervisors of midwives will also need to demonstrate recent relevant experience of undertaking the role of mentor and will be considered appropriate to provide mentorship by local supervisors of midwives, by the POSOM programme leader and by the LSAMO.

Appointment

On successful completion of the programme of preparation, the supervisor of midwives will be eligible for appointment by the LSA. However, it is important to note that successful completion of the preparation course does not automatically ensure appointment as a supervisor of midwives.

Midwives who have undertaken the supervisory role within another LSA will also need to be re-nominated by local supervisors and midwives and undergo the same local selection process as those applying to undertake the preparation programme. This is to ensure that the midwife is familiar with practice in the new area and is known to the midwives.



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These midwives will have an individual interview with the LSAMO and a satisfactory reference from the previous LSAMO will be required. Ideally, the 'supervisor' will have been in the new post for a period of time prior to nomination; three to six months is appropriate.

Preceptorship

New supervisors of midwives will require support from the team of local supervisors and a period of preceptorship must be established for a minimum of three months (full time or equivalent) as per NMC standards (4.1). The level and type of support required will vary but must be relevant to the individual supervisor's needs.

Key Auditable Criteria

Evidence of compliance with this Guideline will be sought from Supervisors and also from midwives at the LSA Midwifery Officer's annual audit visits to each maternity service.

References

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APPENDIX 1

Person Specification

| Key Areas | Essential Attributes | Desirable attributes |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Professional and Academic Eligibility</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A registered and practising midwife • 3 years experience as a practising midwife of which at least one shall have been in the period of two years immediately preceding the appointment • Respected and supported by colleagues • Evidence of recent professional and academic development • Evidence of previous study at degree level • Demonstrates an understanding of the role of the supervisor of midwives • Commitment to a philosophy of working in partnership with women and their families • Demonstrates an awareness of current midwifery research and ability to critically evaluate the findings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of statutory framework for supervision • Demonstrates knowledge of introducing and facilitating change • Evidence of practical experience of monitoring standards of midwifery practice through audit • Understanding of current national policy impacting on midwifery • Understanding of the supervisor's duty to promote childbirth as a normal physiological event • Understanding and application of clinical governance and risk management strategies. |



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| Key Areas | Essential Attributes | Desirable Attributes |
|--|--|---|
| Skills | <p>Leadership skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected by peers and acts as role model • Disseminates knowledge • Challenges practice • Ability to influence in a multi disciplinary setting <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Understands the need for confidentiality while continuing to work in partnership with other professionals and agencies</p> <p>Clear, concise and accurate written skills</p> <p>Verbal skills, ability to listen effectively and to distil and impart information</p> <p>Negotiation skills</p> | <p>Investigative Skills</p> <p>Ability to retrieve, interpret and analyse written and verbal information</p> <p>Ability to objectively/sympathetically undertake an investigation</p> <p>Presentation skills</p> <p>Clear and concise</p> <p>Use of visual aids</p> |
| Attitude and Personal Circumstances | <p>Approachable</p> <p>Diplomatic</p> <p>Open minded /non-judgemental</p> <p>Ability to fulfil the duties of a supervisor of midwives in addition to current responsibilities</p> <p>Ability to be 'on call' for supervision.</p> | |



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APPENDIX 2

ROLE DESCRIPTION FOR SUPERVISOR OF MIDWIVES

The aim of statutory supervision of midwives is to safeguard and enhance the quality of care for the childbearing mother and her family. The supervisor is a source of sound professional advice on all midwifery matters and is accountable to the LSA for all supervisory activities.

The responsibilities of the supervisor in accordance with LSA policy include:

Statutory

1. Receiving and processing Intention to Practise forms, to verify that the statutory requirements for practice have been met.
2. Ensuring that midwives practise within the statutory Midwives rules and standards (2004) and that regulations for the supply, storage, administration and destruction of drugs used within the sphere of their role are met.
3. Providing guidance on maintenance of registration and identifying updating opportunities in relation to statutory requirements.
4. Investigating critical incidents to identify the action required, while seeking to achieve a positive learning experience for the midwives involved, liaising with the LSAMO as appropriate
5. Reporting to the LSA serious cases involving professional conduct where the NMC rules and codes have been contravened and when it is considered that local action would not achieve safe practice, recommending referral to the NMC.
6. Being available for midwives to discuss issues pertaining to their practice and to provide support. This includes those midwives who practise outside an NHS environment. Supervisors of midwives must participate in providing 24 hour supervisory cover.
7. Arranging regular review meetings with individual midwives, at least once annually, to help them to evaluate their practice and identify areas for development and agree the means by which their midwifery expertise can be maintained and developed.
8. Ensuring that effective communication exists with all appropriate stakeholders engaged in determining health services policy, in order that relevant issues are appropriately addressed and resolved.



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Professional

1. Recognise own accountability to the LSA for all supervisory activities.
2. Provide professional leadership to create an environment which supports and empowers professional practice, through evidence –based decision making.
3. Enhance knowledge of own role and individual professional development needs. Attend regular meetings convened by the LSAMO, to discuss relevant issues and share information and experience.
4. Monitor the integrity of the service to ensure that safe and appropriate care is available to all women and neonates.
5. Identify when peer supervisors are not undertaking the role to a satisfactory standard and take appropriate action.
6. Audit the standards for statutory supervision (at least) annually. The LSAMO, through visits to practice sites, will validate maintenance of the standards. Validation of standards may also be achieved by external audits performed by other supervisors of midwives.
7. Maintain records of all supervisory activities for at least seven years. Records may be electronic or written and must be stored in such a way as to maintain confidentiality. Participate in the safekeeping of maternity and midwives' records for 25 years.

Practice issues

1. Ensure that midwives have access to the statutory rules and guidance, evidence and local policies to inform their practice.
2. Monitor the standards of midwifery practice through audit of records and assessment of clinical outcomes and take appropriate action.
3. Contribute to activities such as CMACE, risk management strategies, frameworks for clinical governance or any other relevant enquiry relating to the maternity services.
4. Lead activities such as standard setting, clinical audit and the development of evidence based guidelines and protocols.
5. Contribute to curriculum development of pre-registration and post-registration education programmes for midwives.
6. Participate in the preparation and mentorship of new supervisors of midwives.
7. Issuing of controlled drug authorities, if required, for midwives undertaking home births.



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8. Be available to guide and support midwives through difficult clinical situations.
9. One supervisor in each local team will be designated as the contact supervisor of midwives. She will act as the point of contact for disseminating information from and to the LSA, (see Guideline M).



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APPENDIX 3

Supporting paper for nomination as supervisor of midwives

| | | |
|---|---------------|-------------|
| Name: | Trust: | PIN: |
| Current Job Title and Grade: | | |
| <p>Please indicate, in no more than 1000 words, why you wish to be considered for the role of supervisor of midwives, focusing on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What 'supervision of midwives' means to you• Why you wish to become a supervisor of midwives• What experience and skills can you offer to the role of supervisor of midwives?• What personal qualities and attributes you hold which would help you to fulfil the role of supervisor of midwives? <p>It is expected that current references will be used appropriately.</p> | | |
| Signature: | Date: | |



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APPENDIX 4

Ballot paper for selection of supervisors of midwives

The following midwife has expressed an interest in undertaking the role of supervisor of midwives.

To ensure that supervisors are able to meet the needs of local midwives, you are being asked to indicate whether or not you would support this nominee in their application. Before deciding, please think very carefully about whether;

Name of midwife would make a good supervisor.

Please tick “Yes”, “No” or “Don’t know” for **each** of the following, essential criteria of a Supervisor of Midwives and please return this form to:

..... (Insert name of supervisor co-ordinating the ballot)

Ballot Number..... (For use by co-ordinating supervisor)

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Respected by colleagues | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Commitment to a philosophy of working in partnership with women and their families | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Demonstrates awareness of current midwifery research. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Acts as role model | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Disseminates knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Challenges practice | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Influences / works in partnership with other professionals and agencies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Negotiation skills | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Approachable | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Open minded / non-judgemental | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |