

## **Midwifery Panel**

Date: 11 October 2021

Time: 14:00-17:00

via GoToMeeting

## **Meeting notes**

### **Present**

Dr Anna van der Gaag CBE	Midwifery Panel Chair
Caitlin Wilson	UK Consultant Midwife Forum
Alex McMahon	Interim CNO, Scotland
Cath Broderick	Lay member
Gill Walton	Chief Executive, Royal College of Midwives
Professor Gwendolen Bradshaw	Professor in Health Service Education at the University of Bradford
Professor Janet Hirst	Head of the School of Healthcare, University of Leeds
Jaki Lambert	Head of Midwifery and Professional Midwifery Advisor, Scottish Government
Karen Jewell	Nursing Officer for Maternity and Early Years, CNO Office, Welsh Government
Professor Mary Renfrew FRSE	Professor of Mother and Infant Health, University of Dundee
Nicky Clark	Chair of Lead Midwives for Education Strategic Reference Group
Nina Khazaezadeh	Interim Head of Midwifery/ Consultant Midwife in Public Health
Sally Ashton-May	Lead Midwife, Health Education England
Sascha Wells-Munro (part session)	Maternity Improvement Advisor, NHSE/NHSI
Lord Willis of Knaresborough	Member of the House of Lords

<b>NMC</b>	
Andrea Sutcliffe	Chief Executive and Registrar, NMC
David Warren	Chair, NMC
Professor Geraldine Walters CBE	Executive Director Professional Practice, NMC
Elizabeth Faircliffe	Events Manager, NMC
Verena Wallace	Senior Midwifery Adviser (Policy), NMC
Jenny Ross	Stakeholder Relations Manager, NMC
Johnnet Hamilton	Senior Stakeholder Engagement Officer, NMC
Michele Harrison	Regulation Adviser, Employer Link Service, NMC
Nicola Smith	Assistant Director, Stakeholder Engagement, NMC
Sue West	Senior Nursing Education Adviser, NMC

<b>Apologies</b>	
Professor Charlotte McArdle	Chief Nursing Officer (former), Department of Health, Northern Ireland
Donna Ockendon FRSA	Senior Midwifery Advisor, NMC
Professor Jane Sigsworth	Executive Director of Nursing
Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent OBE	Chief Midwifery Officer for England at NHSE/NHSI
Dr Jacqui Williams	Senior Midwifery Advisor, NMC
Sue Tranka	Chief Nursing Officer, Welsh Government
Wendy Olayiwola	National Maternity Lead for Equality, NHSE/NHSI
Dale Spence	Midwifery Officer, Northern Ireland Government
Sascha Wells-Munro (part session)	Deputy CMidO, England
Sue West	Senior Nursing Education Advisor, NMC

## **Papers**

- NMC corporate update
- NMC Council paper Item 6, on the Education Programme Standards review
- NMC Council Paper on the EC minimum requirements for education of midwives

## **Agenda items covered**

### **1 Welcome from Chair**

- Anna welcomed attendees to the meeting. She congratulated Sir David Warren on his appointment as the new NMC Chair and also welcomed Alex McMahon, who at

the time was appointed interim Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) for Scotland, a post he now holds as CNO for Scotland.

- Anna noted that NMC colleagues in preparing for the meeting had taken on suggestions from the Panel members.
- Anna congratulated Sir David Warren on his appointment as NMC Chair.
- Lord Willis informed the panel that he was stepping down and Anna thanked him for his service which was echoed by other members of the Panel.

## **2 Update from Chief Executive**

- Andrea gave an overview of key updates from the NMC.

### **Points raised in discussion**

- The NMC continues to respond to the Health and Social Care Committee's recommendations on maternity safety in England.
- The importance of midwives listening to women is central to the NMC's Future Midwife standards, and is reiterated in the Code.
- Pressures on the system were impacting on practicing midwives' ability to deliver the standards of care they would like to.
- While representation of women and families in discussions about their care is increasing and improvements have been made, there remains more to do.
- The NMC's new Public Voice Forum will include organisations who represent people using services and other groups, alongside members of the public (including women and people who use maternity services).

## **3 Covid-19 impact and workforce pressures**

- Gill Walton opened the item by giving an overview of the current situation in maternity services and the pressures faced across the UK. She set out an overview of the RCM's view noting that:
  - Midwives are struggling and worried about how they can deliver the level of care they would like to.
  - There is a fragility in the maternity workforce.
  - There continues to be variation in pay and conditions for maternity support workers and in opportunities for flexible working and cultural issues which impact on the delivery of care.
  - There is a need to invest in leadership and management.
  - The continuity of carer model takes time and can be difficult to implement.
  - Midwives face complex reporting and scrutiny.

- Higher Education institutions can be disconnected from services.
- There has been an increase in reports of violence and aggression towards midwives.
- Gill set out RCM survey evidence which suggests that:
  - More midwives are leaving or intending to leave the profession.
  - The main reported reasons for intending to leave were staffing levels and midwives not being satisfied with the quality of care they can provide to women and people who use services.
- The RCM would like to see more midwives and Midwifery Support Workers (MSWs), an improvement in working conditions and increased pay. Other suggested solutions presented were:
  - Increased learning from midwives' experiences.
  - Robust preceptorship for newly qualified midwives (NQM).
  - Flexible working to increase staff retention.
  - Learning from good practice.

#### **Points raised in discussion**

- There is increased use of agency staff.
- Increasing the speed at which qualified students are added to the register would help with current pressures.
- Increased support for students, good preceptorship, widening access and recruitment of Health Care Assistants and exploration of a shortened programme are strategies being implemented in Scotland
- Clinical educators do not always have capacity to support clinical practice and the system needs more of them.
- Midwifery Support workers are also vital to the workforce and should be valued.
- Some midwives become very specialised.
- Continuity of carer can be a difficult model to implement given other pressures within the role.
- Consideration could be given to whether changes to current EU Standards could widen access to midwifery courses.
- A cross sectoral approach was needed.

- While there are lessons from failures it was also important to learn from examples of good practice such as the All Wales Bank System.
- It was important to bring an equality and evidence lens to what midwives are doing.
- Workforce pressures looked set to remain a concern for some time. Robust implementation of the [Future Midwife](#) Standards needed continued focus.

#### **4 Co-production membership policy**

- The stakeholder engagement team provided an overview of the NMC's approach to co-production and its implications for improvements in how Midwifery Panel works.

##### **Points raised in discussion**

- Consideration should be given to including students in Midwifery Panel's membership.

#### **5 Race health inequalities**

- The EDI team gave an overview of recent evidence on race health inequalities and the NMC's work in this area.
- There was discussion of potential areas of NMC action to help address systemic inequalities through regulatory action through education standards and the decolonisation of education, support, through CPD opportunities, working with employers and engagement with communities and influence, through sharing and using its data more effectively.

##### **Points made in discussion**

- Many higher education institutions are giving consideration to decolonising course content.
- Students were increasingly sharing their lived experiences and suggesting changes. However, leaders and managers must drive the change.
- Co-production is important. Guy's and St Thomas' have organised training delivered by members of Maternity Voices Partnership.
- Within the NMC Standards development, inequalities are front and centre. There is work underway to develop examples of excellence using the Standards.
- Professor Mary Renfrew has been undertaking research on Standards, generating examples of excellence. This paper will be shared with the panel once it is published.
- Higher Education Institutions have published a [Race Equality Charter Review](#).

- Universities need to understand and address under-representation – as reflected in the Future Midwife standards.
- Addressing race inequalities requires sustained commitment from the very top to support culture changes.
- There is a lot of important work going on for example, the [Turning the Tide Strategy](#). This would require sustained commitment and working together
- It was agreed there would be a further panel discussion on this topic at a future date.

## **6 Programme Standards (EU directive)**

### *Update on NMC's programme standards following Council discussion*

- The NMC provided an update on recent research on pre-registration nursing and midwifery Standards and forthcoming consultation in this area.

#### **Points made in discussion**

- The UK remained part of the European Higher Education Area.
- Embedding the Standards into practice remains vital.

## **7 Meeting close**

- Anna closed the meeting, thanking everyone for their participation and contributions.
- The next meeting will be held on 1 March 2022, 14:00–17:00.