

# Health Improvement Scotland consultation on scrutiny priorities for healthcare in Scotland (2013-2015)

## A response from the Nursing and Midwifery Council

We are the regulator for nursing and midwifery in the UK. We exist to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public. We set standards of education, training, conduct and performance for nurses and midwives, and hold the register of those who have qualified and meet those standards. We have clear and transparent processes to investigate and deal with nurses and midwives who fall short of our standards.

Whilst we recognise that the scrutiny priorities do not all fall within our remit, we have taken this opportunity to present an overview of how our work prepares nurses and midwives to care for patients and clients safety and effectively.

The standards for education set by the NMC require demonstration of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are essential for nurses to provide safe, effective and compassionate care that respects the diversity of the population. The competencies to be met for pre-registration nursing education (2010)<sup>1</sup> are organised into four domains, which apply within all care settings. These are professional values, communication and interpersonal skills, nursing practice and decision making and leadership, management and team working. We have also identified the skills and professional behaviours that a nursing student must demonstrate within their three year programme. These are articulated within the five essential skills clusters, which address care, compassion and communication, organisational aspects of care, infection prevention and control, nutrition and fluid management and medicines management.<sup>2</sup> Compliance with the standards within both academic and practice settings is assessed and monitored through a quality assurance framework.

In 2009 we published *Guidance for the care of older people* (NMC, 2009)<sup>3</sup> which sets out principles for best practice when caring for older people with a particular focus on maintaining dignity, autonomy and respect. Alongside the guidance, we also published a document called *Care and respect every time: What you can expect from nurses* (NMC, 2009). This includes information for older people and their carers about what they can expect from registered nurses and how to challenge when care does not meet required expectations.<sup>4</sup>

We have recently consulted on, and revised, the current Midwives Rules and Standards to ensure they are relevant to contemporary practice, that they are clear with regards to the supervision of midwives and that they include what is necessary to ensure a high standard of care from midwives. These come into force on the first of January 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://standards.nmc-uk.org/PreRegNursing/statutory/competencies/Pages/Competencies.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> [http://standards.nmc-uk.org/Documents/Annexe3\\_%20ESCs\\_16092010.pdf](http://standards.nmc-uk.org/Documents/Annexe3_%20ESCs_16092010.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nmc-uk.org/General-public/Older-people-and-their-carers/Care-and-respect-every-time-new-guidance-for-the-care-of-older-people/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nmc-uk.org/General-public/Older-people-and-their-carers/Care-and-respect-every-time/>

We strongly endorse the drive for patient and public involvement in shaping the development of healthcare. In order to best protect patients and the public, listening to their views is crucial, along with effective wider stakeholder engagement and collaboration.

From a regulatory perspective, we are supportive of initiatives that seek to address failings in care and to enhance the experiences of service users through promoting and sharing good practice. We are committed to working with system and professional regulators across the UK to share information. A co-ordinated approach in this area would lead to more effective analysis of data, may reduce costs, and a more accurate mapping of levels of risk. We note that you intend to work closely with professional regulators to develop a systematic approach for sharing both 'hard' and 'soft' intelligence. We would welcome the development of a national strategic partnership with Health Improvement Scotland.