

Midwifery Panel
held at 09:00 on 19 May 2022
at Via GoToMeeting

Meeting notes

Present

Name	Title
Anna van der Gaag	Midwifery Panel Chair
Andrea Sutcliffe	Chief Executive and Registrar, NMC
Matthew McClelland	Executive Director Strategy and Insight, NMC
Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent	Chief Midwifery Officer, England
Justine Craig	Chief Midwifery Officer, Scotland
Karen Jewell	Chief Midwifery Officer, Wales
Dale Spence	Midwifery Officer, Northern Ireland
Maria McIlgorm	Chief Nursing Officer, Northern Ireland
Gill Walton	Chief Executive and General Secretary, RCM
Janice Sigsworth	Director of Nursing, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
Jayne Marshall	Foundation Professor, University of Leicester
Mary Renfrew	Professor of Mother and Infant Health, University of Dundee
Sascha Wells-Munro	Deputy Chief Midwifery Officer, England
Caitlin Wilson	Chair, Royal College of Midwives Consultant Midwife Network
Agnes Agyepong	Founder and CEO, Global Black Maternal Health
Jacqui Williams	Senior Midwifery Adviser (Education), NMC
Verena Wallace	Senior Midwifery Adviser (Policy), NMC
Nicola Smith	Assistant Director Stakeholder Engagement, NMC

Maddie Elder	Policy Manager, NMC
Jasmine Bailey	Public Affairs Officer, NMC
Gabi Jones	Stakeholder Engagement Manager, NMC
Beth Lethbridge	Events Officer, NMC

Handouts

- NMC update paper
- Notes of meeting held in March 2022

Agenda items covered

1 Welcome from Chair

- Anna van der Gaag welcomed attendees to the meeting, outlining the agenda and updating on apologies for absence received.
- Anna noted that Donna Ockenden had hoped to attend today's discussion on the actions arising from her report, however she was unable to join due to ongoing work related to the review.

2 Update from Chief Executive

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

Points raised in discussion

- [International Day of the Midwife](#) celebrations were highlighted.
- The NMC has appointed a new Council member for Scotland, registered midwife, Mags McGuire.
- The panel noted its congratulations to Karen Jewell on being appointed Chief Midwifery Officer for Wales.
- The NMC had published its [corporate plan](#), which outlined priorities for 2022-2025.
- The NMC's annual registration [data report](#) was published on 18 May. Overall numbers on the register had increased, but the data reflected challenges facing the professions, including rising numbers leaving the register.

3 Ockenden report

- Andrea Sutcliffe opened this item by reflecting on the challenges facing maternity services and the impact on women, babies, and families.

- Matthew McClelland outlined how the NMC had considered the recommendations of the Ockenden report and how they relate to our work. He set out what actions the NMC is taking in response, and how we are working with our partners. This included writing to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to outline our actions.
- Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent shared reflections on the report, including the distress and pain felt by families, professionals and the public reading the report. Jacqueline said the report must be used as an opportunity to improve maternity care and outlined actions NHS England and NHS Improvement were taking in response.
- Panel members then held an open discussion on the themes raised in the report and actions being taken in response.

Points raised in discussion

- The importance of women's voices shaping care was repeatedly reflected in discussions as vital to maternity safety. Panel members recognised that a key message within the Ockenden report was women reporting they had not been listened to, and that improvements can be made to support professionals to understand the impact of their words and actions.
- Panel members reflected on the low morale within the midwifery profession, and the risk that changes made in light of the report may not be sufficient or sustained.
- Members reflected on the value of midwifery students completing placements outside of their local Board/Trust, allowing them to experience working within different teams and cultures. There are examples of student surveys highlighting cultural issues in areas where poor quality care has been identified in the past.
- There was discussion around the causes of quality failings, and how these could be understood, learned from and how professionals within maternity services could be supported to change behaviours and develop skills. Underpinning this, Panel members agreed, must be the voices of women.
- Panel members reflected on the need to maintain focus on addressing inequality and disparity of outcomes for women within maternity services.
- Panel members agreed to return to a discussion on these themes at a future meeting when Donna Ockenden hopes to be able to attend.

4 Guest speaker: Agnes Agyepong

- Agnes Agyepong, Founder and CEO of Global Black Maternal Health Institute presented to Panel members on her work advocating for and engaging with women using maternity services.

- Agnes shared examples of the experiences of women she has supported, often highlighting pressures within maternity services. She set out the link between the experience of professionals working within maternity services, and the quality of care women receive, highlighting that improved experiences for all are vital.
- Agnes reflected on the value of considering the experience of partners and other family members, who have a critical role in supporting women and babies, and who can also be traumatised by birth.
- Agnes highlighted the importance of sharing positive stories as well as troubling ones. She reflected that Black women had reported feeling it is only when their trauma is shared that they are listened to, but there is value in listening to positive experiences too.
- Agnes challenged Panel members to consider how to make changes now so the same issues are no longer prevalent in five years' time.

Points raised in discussion

- Panel members thanked Agnes for her presentation and the powerful stories she shared.
- There was acknowledgment that staff morale and lack of time has a strong impact on the experiences of women and the importance of addressing these areas.
- There was agreement that these stories demonstrated how crucial public engagement and involvement is across all work to develop maternity services, and the importance of reflecting the diversity of the public in this engagement.

5 Update from the Senior Midwifery Advisers

- Jacqui Williams and Verena Wallace shared an update on their work over recent months and took questions from Panel members. They updated on:
 - Work to continue promoting the Future Midwife standards and support their implementation, including a range of visits across the UK.
 - Work to map the Future Midwife standards to the actions in the Ockenden review.
 - Work to review the midwifery blueprint for the [Test of Competence](#).
 - Proposed changes to our pre-registration standards which will be formally consulted on over summer.

Points raised in discussion

- There was a point made about preceptorship and the challenge of supporting midwives to consolidate their learning across programmes.

- Panel members reflected on the challenge of supporting professionals to reflect on the Future Midwife standards, as they were launched shortly before the pandemic which understandably preoccupied people. There was agreement that continued promotion of the Future Midwife Standards was vital.

6 Meeting close

- Anna van der Gaag closed the meeting, thanking all attendees for their participation and contributions. She reminded members that the next meeting will take place online on 21 September, 10:00-13:00.