



Nursing & Midwifery  
Council

**NMC**

## **Support for parents**

**How supervision  
and supervisors  
of midwives can  
help you**

This leaflet informs you how the supervision of midwives and a supervisor of midwives can directly support both you and the midwife giving you care.



## Who are supervisors of midwives?

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Supervisors of midwives are experienced practising midwives who have undertaken additional education and training to support, guide and supervise midwives. Every midwife must have a named supervisor of midwives.

## What is the role of a supervisor of midwives?

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Supervisors of midwives develop and maintain safe practice to ensure protection of you, your baby and family. They meet regularly with midwives and ensure a high standard of care is provided.

The supervisors are independent of the employer and often work in a team. Their role is different from the midwifery manager who is responsible to the employer to make sure that maternity services run effectively. The supervisor of midwives is accountable to the local supervising authority (LSA) and is supported in their role by the local supervising authority midwifery officer (LSAMO).



## **Who is the local supervising authority midwifery officer (LSAMO)?**

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The LSA midwifery officer (LSAMO) is an experienced practising midwife with a leadership role. They are able to give advice on the supervision of midwives as well as on midwifery practice and maternity services in general. They appoint the supervisors of midwives.

## **What do supervisors of midwives do?**

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Supervisors of midwives give guidance and support to both midwives and you. They support the practice of midwives and ensure that the care offered is right for you, is given in the right place, by the right person and that it will benefit you and your baby. They act as positive role models for midwives, guiding and supporting them in developing skills and expertise. If a

midwife requires additional education, training and support in practice, a supervisor can recommend a formal programme of supervised practice.

## **How can supervisors of midwives help you?**

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Whilst the supervisor will support the midwife in the care she gives you, the supervisor can additionally help you by:

- Listening and advocating on concerns about the care you have received from your midwife. Supervisors will talk to your midwife if you are concerned or unhappy.
- Supporting and advising you and your midwife in your care choices, for example place of birth.
- Creating an environment that facilitates effective communication between you and your midwife about your care.



- Discussing and debriefing with you if you are unhappy with your birth outcome or treatment. If you have had a difficult or traumatic birth, a supervisor can go through your notes and discuss your experiences with you if you feel you are unable to do this with your midwife.
- Protecting the public by promoting safe practice and investigating concerns of health, competence, behaviour or misconduct of midwives. Supervisors can implement remedial action through supervised practice or referral to the local supervising authority (LSA) and the midwives' regulatory body, the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC).
- Responding to your complaints or concerns which may include assisting with issues such as staff attitudes, behaviour and care received. Discussing your concerns with a supervisor does not prevent you from undertaking a formal complaints procedure with your maternity care provider or with the NMC.

## How do I contact a supervisor of midwives?

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A supervisor of midwives should be available 24 hours a day and can be contacted by telephoning your local maternity unit. If you have any problems contacting a supervisor ask the maternity unit to inform the LSA office and ask them to call you. Alternatively you can access contact details of LSA midwifery officers (LSAMO) in the United Kingdom on the NMC website at [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org). The LSAMO will be able to provide you with further information on how to contact a supervisor of midwives in your area.



## What is the role of the Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC)?

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The Nursing & Midwifery Council exists to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the public.

- We register all nurses and midwives and ensure that they are properly qualified and competent to work in the UK.
- We set the standards of education, training and conduct that nurses and midwives need to deliver high quality healthcare consistently throughout their careers.

- We ensure that nurses and midwives keep their skills and knowledge up to date and uphold the standards of their professional code.
- We ensure that midwives are safe to practise by setting rules for their practice and supervision.
- We have fair processes to investigate allegations made against nurses and midwives who may not have followed the code.

Midwives must be registered with the NMC in order to practice in the UK and are accountable to the NMC. The NMC works closely with supervisors of midwives, the LSA midwifery officers and the LSA to ensure a safe standard of midwifery practice.

Please contact us if you need this leaflet in large print or another format.

**“Supervisors of midwives give guidance and support to both midwives and you to ensure that the care offered is right for you, is given in the right place, by the right person and that it will benefit you and your baby.”**

