

## Community mental health services

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2012: health  
and social care  
act

### What is community mental health services?

Community mental health services provide care, treatment and management to people experiencing mental health challenges that prevents them from functioning well day to day (Tulane University, 2022)

- Community health services also provide support for individuals experiencing mental health problems whilst they live in their own homes.
- They include a range of professionals such as psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers and support workers (Rethink Mental Illness, 2019)
- The Goal of community mental health services is to help individuals get mentally better and live a meaningful life.
- Holistic care is provided focusing on the person as a whole not just their diagnosis

Social inclusion

Clinical support

Crisis prevention

### History

In the **18th-19th century** people who had mental illness were treated in asylums. They were usually isolated from society and were not supported in the community .

- Many patients were normally sent to workhouses and prisons (The National Archives, 2019)

The field of psychiatry started to change after the first world war (Science Museum, 2023). The mid 20th century was a transformative era for mental health services in the UK. This was the period that the NHS was founded and many more voluntary organizations. The goal of care in the community was to create an empowering environment for those living with mental health (Dee, 2024).

- The **1990** national health service and community care act was an important piece of legislation. Because of this act the responsibility of local authorities were formalized and they were able to provide social care services (The Health Foundation, 1990)

1 In 4 people in the UK  
will experience a mental  
health problem each  
year

asylums

Post-war  
shift

1990 act

### How to access community mental health services?

To access some community mental health services a GP can refer you to the service that they feel suits you best (NHS, 2022).

- Someone could also selfrefer themselves by utilizing a digital referral assistant or telephone.
- Some mental health services are provided by local authorities like the council they offer services such as helplines, therapy and crises support (NHS, 2021)
- Local charities and councils also provide community support via charities and voluntary services

Primary care



Assessment



support

### Challenges in service delivery

One of the issues we find today in community mental health services is that there are not enough trained staff to treat and support people with mental illness. The levels of recruitment and retention are too low (BMA, 2024). ⚠️

Excludes  
people

People with learning disabilities and autism are most likely to have difficulty accessing community mental health services. If there is a service that is only contactable via phone that excludes people who can not or do not wish to use a phone which often includes people with learning disabilities and autistic people (Healthwatch Sutton, 2022). 📞

Community antenatal midwifery consists of supporting pregnant women outside of the traditional hospital environment. Community midwives provide services for pregnant women in antenatal clinics, community hubs and health centres. They offer support, advice empowerment and advocacy for woman. Their daily tasks include providing regular check-ups, monitor the health of both mother and baby and provide education on pre-natal and post-natal care (University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire, 2025). Their role is more than just medical assistance without them holistic care for pregnant women would not exist. This essay will highlight and show the historical professionalization of midwifery, explore its current delivery model and discuss its significance in enhancing the quality of life for service users.

The practise of midwifery can be traced back to the palaeolithic era, which was BC, during this era women would often give birth alone by themselves. They would use their own knowledge to help them give birth which normally came from watching other mammals (international confederation of midwives, 2022). Prior to 1902 midwives were often untrained but the midwives act of 1902 created a turn in the 20<sup>th</sup> century this legislation caused a big shift taking midwifery from an informal practise into a regulated profession. This act ensured that maternal and infant mortality rates were reduced it also established that that to be a midwife you would need formal certification (memories of nursing, 2017). The 1902 act paved the way for midwifery in the UK.

Today community antenatal services function through GP practises and children's centres that are closer to pregnant women's home (NHS, 2023). It's much easier for pregnant women to book their appointments online, this method of booking appointments online reduces anxiety due to the women feeling more comfortable in a familiar place like the GP or a children's centre. Research also shows that midwifery care does save lives and that women have a more improved health, less harmful interventions and that women are more satisfied with this type of care than any other care (Wickham, 2018). However, despite these benefits the service often receives complaints and reports about racism and discrimination towards people of colour. Muslim families have often expressed that they feel discriminated because of their religion and that they feel as if they can't speak up because they worry their baby will receive poor treatment. There has also been similar racial discrimination between the staff. Situations have occurred where a staff has reported a racially motivated comment or behaviour but its usually not taken seriously (Buchanan and Eley, 2026).

In conclusion community antenatal midwifery has drastically evolved from women giving birth by themselves to women having a team to support them through their 9 months of pregnancy despite some of the challenges within the antenatal midwifery services relating to discrimination issues in certain areas are still some amazing cons to the service. By focusing on the mother and baby's well-being the

service ensures that the journey into motherhood is supported by professionals and personalized care, this allows the mother to integrate into her new role at peace.

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