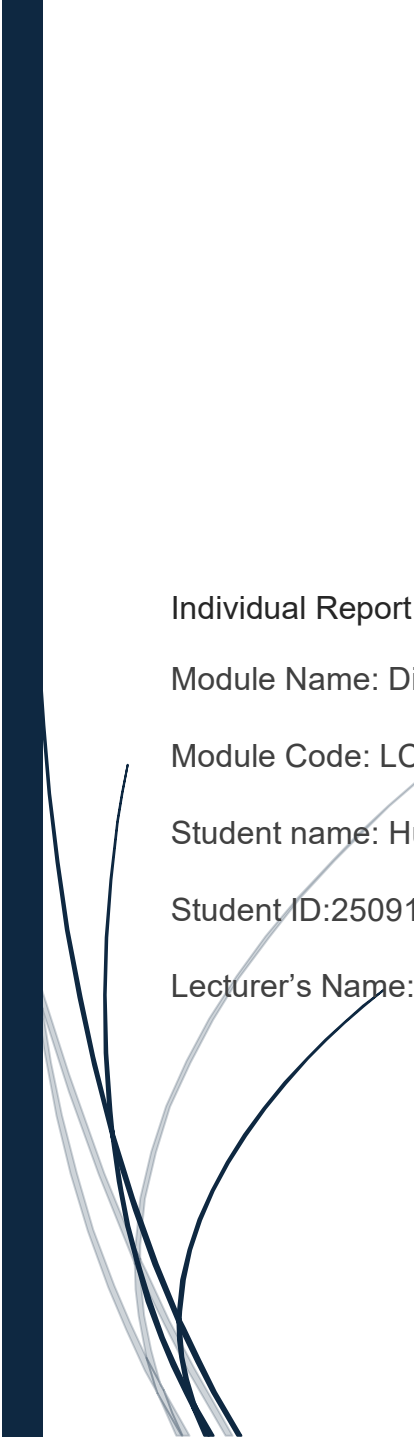




Individual Report

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Research Topic: Midwife in the Health and Social Care Field

Introduction

Roles in the health and social care sector are very important to ensure safe, effective, and person-centred care. Midwives are key professionals who support women, newborns, and families during pregnancy, labour, and after birth. They monitor health, give advice, and provide emotional support to mothers. Midwives also teach families about newborn care and work with other health professionals to maintain high standards of care (NHS Healthcareers, 2025). This report examines the responsibilities of a midwife, the skills required for good practice, and strategies to develop these skills. It also highlights a current issue affecting midwifery in the UK.

Problem Statement

A major problem in the UK health and social care sector is the shortage of midwives. According to the Royal College of Midwives (2025), the country needs thousands more midwives to meet demand. This shortage causes delayed antenatal appointments, insufficient support during labour, and reduced postnatal care. It affects patients, who may experience higher stress and lower safety, midwives, who face heavy workloads and risk of burnout, and healthcare organisations, which struggle to provide high-quality services.

The shortage also affects women's health outcomes and can increase complications for mothers and babies. Overworked midwives may make mistakes or have less time for patient care, affecting safety and satisfaction (WHO, 2021). Families may feel unsupported during pregnancy and after birth.

This problem is urgent because midwives are essential to safe childbirth and maternal health. Research is needed to understand the causes of the shortage, the experiences of midwives and women, and possible solutions to improve staffing, training, and care standards (BMC Nursing, 2024).

Justification

Researching midwifery shortages is important for several reasons. First, midwives are central to maternal and newborn health, and shortages directly affect care quality and patient safety. Second, understanding midwives' experiences helps identify causes of stress, burnout, and staff turnover. Third, research can highlight effective strategies for recruitment, retention, and training (Skills England, 2025).

Evidence-based research can support hospitals and health authorities in planning workforce strategies and allocating resources. It can also improve education programs for midwives, ensuring they develop the skills needed for modern healthcare. Research findings can influence UK health policies and help organisations meet national care standards. By addressing the midwife shortage, research can enhance care for mothers and newborns, improve staff wellbeing, and strengthen overall health services (NHS Healthcareers, 2025; WHO, 2021).

Information Sources and Justification

1. NHS Healthcareers (2025) - Describes midwives' roles, duties, and required skills. Explains daily responsibilities and professional standards. Chosen because it is an official and credible source that provides a clear description of midwifery work in the UK (NHS Healthcareers, 2025).
2. Royal College of Midwives (2025) - Discusses workforce shortages, staffing challenges, and professional support. Provides data on how midwife shortages affect patients and staff. Selected because it gives current statistics and professional guidance about midwifery issues (RCM, 2025).
3. World Health Organization (2021) - Explains global midwifery standards and recommendations. Offers international best practices for comparison with UK standards. Chosen to show global guidelines and evidence-based practices that could improve UK midwifery (WHO, 2021).
4. BMC Nursing (2024) - Reports evidence-based strategies to develop midwives' skills. Highlights ways to train and support midwives for better care.

Chosen because it provides peer-reviewed academic evidence supporting solutions for workforce challenges (BMC Nursing, 2024).

5. Skills England (2025) - Details midwifery competencies and required professional skills. Shows what skills midwives need to provide high-quality care. Important for linking workforce challenges with training and skill development needs (Skills England, 2025).
6. Chelsea and Westminster NHS Trust (2025) - Explains midwifery research, career development, and practice improvement. Demonstrates practical applications of research to improve midwifery. Chosen to show how research supports midwives' professional growth and improves care delivery (Chelsea and Westminster NHS, 2025).

Task 2: Research Methodologies

Give a brief overview of quantitative and qualitative research.

Quantitative research collects numerical data that can be measured and analysed statistically. It is used to identify trends, such as the number of midwives in a hospital or the percentage of delayed appointments (StudySmarter, 2025).

Qualitative research collects descriptive data, like opinions, experiences, and feelings. Methods include interviews, observations, or case studies, for example asking women about their experiences with midwife care (StudySmarter, 2025).

What type of research methodology will you use for your research and why?

Chosen Methodology:

This research will use a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data will show the scale of the midwife shortage and delays in care. Qualitative data will provide insights into the experiences of midwives and women, highlighting challenges and emotional impacts (BMC Nursing, 2024). Using both methods ensures a full understanding of the issue and supports evidence-based recommendations to improve midwifery services and patient care in the UK.

Task 3: Data Collection

Overview of primary and secondary data collection

Primary data is collected directly by the researcher through surveys, interviews, or observations (Federation University, 2025). For example, interviews with midwives and women will provide real experiences.

Secondary data comes from existing sources, such as reports, academic articles, or government statistics (Federation University, 2025).

What form of data will be used to address your research problem, and why?

Chosen Data:

This research will use both primary and secondary data. Primary data will include interviews with midwives and women to explore experiences of care and workload challenges. Secondary data will include official reports, academic journals, and statistics on midwife shortages and care quality (RCM, 2025; WHO, 2021).

Using both types of data ensures a complete analysis. Primary data gives personal insights, while secondary data provides verified facts. This combination aligns with the mixed-methods methodology and strengthens the reliability of the research findings.

Conclusion

Midwives are essential to UK health and social care, supporting women, babies, and families. A current problem is the shortage of midwives, which affects patient safety, care quality, and staff wellbeing (RCM, 2025). Research is necessary to understand the causes and consequences of this shortage and to identify solutions. Reliable sources, including NHS, WHO, and peer-reviewed journals, provide evidence of workforce challenges and strategies to improve training and support (BMC Nursing, 2024). Using a mixed-methods approach with primary and secondary data allows researchers to analyse both numerical trends and personal experiences. Findings can guide workforce planning, improve midwifery education, and enhance patient

care. Addressing the midwife shortage will strengthen maternal and newborn health services and support midwives in delivering safe, effective, and person-centred care.

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