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Midwifery

Introduction.

In this report, I have taken on the role of a Midwife, a healthcare professional responsible for supporting women throughout their pregnancies, childbirth, and their postnatal period. Within the NHS, midwives are especially important as they provide most maternity care, prompt safety, and contribute to national public health priorities. I chosen this role because I am passionate about providing compassionate, evidence-based care during one of the most significant stages of life. This role is essential, as midwives promote the child and mother's safety, wellbeing, and empowerment of members and babies. This report will outline the key responsibilities of a midwife, explore the skills and attributes needed for the effective practice, and explain how these contribute to height-quality maternity care. It will also provide a clear overview of planned learning and development.

Discription of, and Background to, Health and Social care in Midwifery.

Midwifery is. Central profession within health and social care, providing essential support to women, babies, and families throughout pregnancy, labour, and their postnatal period. Midwives play a crucial role in promoting safe, healthy pregnancies and ensuring the women receive personalised, compassionate, and evidence-based care. Their work is vital because they not only safeguard the physical wellbeing of the mothers and infants but also support emotional health, informed decision-making and positive birth experiences. Midwifery contributes significantly to the public health by offering education, early inter toons, and advocacy for women's rights and choices.

The duties of a Midwife are wide ranging. They include conducting antenatal assessments, monitoring feral development, providing health education, supporting women during labour, delivering babies, and offering postnatal care such as newborn checks and breastfeeding support. Midwives also identify complications early and refer to other healthcare professionals when necessary. The most important duty of a

midwife is ensuring the safety and well-being of both the patient/mother and baby while promoting a respectful, empowering approach to care.

To perform this role effectively, midwives require strong communication skills, clinical knowledge, critical thinking, empathy, and the ability to stay calm under pressure. They must work confidently both independently and as part of multidisciplinary teams to deliver high-quality, holistic maternity care.

Evaluation of the Skills Needed for Midwives in healthcare.

Midwifery requires a combination of clinical, interpersonal, and decision-making skills to ensure safe, high-quality maternity care.

The three most important skills for midwives are **communication, clinical decision – making, and empathy**. I choose these skills because they directly influence safety, patient experience, and effective teamwork—key elements identified in the NMC Code (2018), which states that midwives must practice safety, communicate clearly, and prioritise people.

Communication: is crucial because midwives must explain procedures, provide reassurance, obtain informed consent, and coordinate with other professionals such as obstetricians, and neonatal nurses, and health visitors. Strong communication helps staff work more efficiently by reducing misunderstandings and ensuring timely interventions. For example, during labour a midwife may clearly communicate changes in contractions or fetal heart rate to the medical team, enabling quick action if complications arise. Without strong communication skill, crucial information can be missed, leading to delays, increased risk, and feelings of anxiety or confusion for the mother.

Clinical decision making: is equally essential. Midwives must quickly interpret observations, assess risk, and make safe judgments based on evidence and guidelines.

This includes recognising signs of pre-eclampsia, monitoring fetal wellbeing, or deciding when to escalate care. Strong decision-making helps staff to respond confidently and appropriately in unpredictable situations. For instance, if a midwife indicates/identifies reduced fetal movement, they must know when to refer the mother for urgent assessment. Without these skills, mistakes or delayed decisions could put both mother and baby at risk, potentially leading to preventable emergencies.

Empathy: is vital for building trust and offering emotional support. Pregnancy and childbirth can be stressful, and women often rely on midwives for reassurance. Empathy promotes dignity, respect, and compassionate care, reflecting NHS values. In practice, a midwife might support a woman experiencing fear after a previous traumatic birth by listening, validating her feelings, and helping her create a personalised birth plan.

If a midwife lacks empathy, women may feel dismissed, unsupported, or less likely to share concerns, increasing the risk of unmet needs or poor mental health.

Together, these skills enable midwives to provide safe, respectful, and person-centred care. When combined, they strengthen teamwork, improve outcomes, and ensure that women and families receive the support they need throughout their maternity journey.

Strategies to improve Skills for Midwives.

To strengthen the essential skills required in midwifery-communication, clinical decisions-making, and empathy. Three effective improvements strategies are **reflective practice, simulation-based training, and supervision and mentorship**. These strategies are widely recommended in health and social care because they deepen professional understanding, enhance safety, and support continuous learning (NMC 2018).

Reflective practice. Is a valuable strategy because it encourages midwives to evaluate their actions, thoughts, and responses after clinical event. By reflecting, practitioners can identify strengths and areas for improvement. For example, after supporting a woman in labour who felt anxious, a student midwife might reflect on how well they could have done differently now or next time. This strategy works by increasing self-awareness and helping staff direct their behaviour in future situations. I choose this because reflection is a core part of the NMC Code and is essential for maintaining professionalism and improving communication and empathy.

Simulation-based training, is another highly effective method for developing clinical decision-making and teamwork skills. Simulation allows midwives to practise responding to emergency situations, such as postpartum haemorrhage or shoulder dystocia in a safe, controlled environment. This helps them learn how to assess risks, make quick decisions, and communicate clearly under pressure. For example, during a simulated obstetric emergency, a midwife might learn how to coordinate with doctors, call for help promptly, and prioritise interventions. This strategy is valuable because research shows that simulation improves confidence, competence, and patient safety. I choose this because midwifery situation can change rapidly, and practitioners must feel prepared for complex or high-risk scenarios.

Supervision and mentorship. Also play a crucial role in skills development. Working alongside an experienced midwife enables learners of junior staff to gain practical guidance, feedback, and emotional support. Mentors can model effective communication, demonstrate compassionate care, and explain clinical reasoning. For instance, during antenatal appointments a mentor might show a student how to use open-ended questions to build rapport with women. This strategy works because it promotes professional growth, builds confidence, and ensures that practice aligns with evidence-based standards. I choose this because supportive relationships in healthcare significantly improve learning and performance.

Together, these strategies help midwives continually develop the communication, decision-making and empathy skills needed to provide safe, compassionate, and high-quality maternity care.

Sources to support Midwifery strategies

1. Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) The code (2018)
 - States that midwives must 'practise effectively, preserve safety, and promote professionalism and trust'
 - Encourages reflective practice, continue professional development, and effective communication.
2. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidelines intrapartum Care and Antenatal Care
 - Provide evidence-based guidance for clinical decision-making
 - Stress the importance of recognising deterioration, escalating concerns, and working in multi-disciplinary teams.
3. Royal College of Midwives (RCM) Education and Practice Standards
 - Promote simulation training to prepare midwives for emergencies
 - Emphasise compassionate, women-centred care and the development of emotional intelligence.
4. World Health Organisation (WHO) Standards for improving Quality of Maternal and newborn care.
 - Highlight the importance of respectful maternity care, empathy, and effective communication.

How strategies improve midwifery skill.

1. **Reflective practice: example:** During a placement, a student midwife supported a woman in early labour who spoke limited English. The student realised afterwards that she relied too heavily on medical terminology. Through reflection (as encouraged by the NMC CODE), she recognised the need to use simpler language and check understanding more often. Next shift, she used

visual aids and had an interpreter's support, improving communication and reducing the women's anxiety so that the mother doesn't feel she could not express her needs. So this will strengthen communication, promotes cultural sensitivity and improves clarity when explaining

2. **Simulation-based Training: example:** a midwifery team practised a simulated postpartum haemorrhaging (PPH) scenario. During the training, the student midwife learned how to call the emergency buzzer, administer uterotonics, and confidently alerted the team, helping to stabilise the mother more quickly. So this shows to improve your skills you will definitely need to yield and make rapid decisions, to improve teamwork and role awareness, and to reduce panic in emergencies.
3. **Supervisor and membership: example:** under the guidance of the mentor, a student midwife learned how to conduct a sensitive postnatal mental health conversations. The mentors demonstrated active listening, asking gentle open ended questions like example "how have you been coping emotionally since birth?" After observing, the student practised these skills herself, gaining confidence in delivering compassionate care. So for this sector the midwives skills are to enhance empathy and emotional support, improve communication with vulnerable mothers and patients, and to build confidence when dealing with sensitive issues.

Conclusion.

Overall, midwifery plays a vital role in the NHS, providing safe compassionate and high quality maternity care. Effective communication, sound clinical decision making, and empathy are essential skills that support women and babies throughout pregnancy, birth, and postnatal period.

Strategies such as reflective practice, simulation based training, and supportive mentorship help midwives continually strengthen these skills and improve these areas, midwives are better equipped to deliver women centred care and respond safely to complex situations. Ultimately, strong midwifery practice contributes to healthier families, better outcomes, and a more supportive healthcare system.

Reference list:

- Nursing and Midwifery Council. *The Code: professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates*. London: NMC: www.nmc.org.uk last updated 4th January 2025
- World Health Organization. *Standards for improving quality of maternal and newborn care in health facilities*. www.nhs.org.uk
- Royal college of Midwives (RMC). Evidence based midwifery and Practice resources. London: RMC: <https://www.rmc.org.uk>

- World Health Organisation (WHO). Standards for improving quality of maternal and newborn care in health facilities.

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