

DonnaOckenden

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Dear NMC members

My name is Donna Ockenden and I am a registered midwife and also the Midwifery Advisor to the NMC.

There have been a number of significant developments in the world of midwifery over the last few weeks and I wanted to make sure that you have all the latest information.

As you know, the NMC has recently written to you about the Government's plans to amend its legislation. This means some important changes for you as a midwife. One of the most significant changes is that supervision will no longer be linked to regulation. As a midwife I know that many of you value supervision and I wanted to reassure you that plans are well developed in the four countries of the UK for a new model of supervision, through employers.

This will ensure that we keep the things that are really valued about the supervision process. You can find out more about these changes on our website.

In addition to the changes to supervision, the NMC will also no longer be required to have a statutory Midwifery Committee – but that doesn't mean that midwives will no longer have a voice at the NMC – far from it. There are already a number of plans in place to improve the way midwives are heard at the NMC. In fact the Royal College of Midwives has recently said how pleased they are with the NMC's plans for ensuring a strong midwifery voice in the future.

As midwifery advisor to the NMC I am committed to ensuring that these plans continue to be delivered. In 2017 we have already started a programme of shadowing midwives in their workplace with the NMC's first visit of the year to Portsmouth Maternity services in January. Discussions are already underway to confirm further visits with other maternity services across the four countries of the UK. If you would like your maternity service to host an NMC 'shadowing visit', please do get in touch to talk to us about this.

Finally, away from changes to our legislation, you may be aware that the NMC has recently made a decision about the indemnity arrangements of some independent midwives who are members of Independent Midwives UK (IMUK). Following a detailed and complex investigation, the NMC's Registrar had to make a difficult decision that the indemnity scheme being relied upon was not appropriate. This is because it would not be able to call upon sufficient financial resources to meet the costs of a successful claim for damages that may have arisen in a range of situations. This includes catastrophic injury to both mothers and babies.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that the concerns identified by the NMC only affect a very small number of independent midwives who are members of IMUK and they have all been contacted directly about this issue. Please be assured that the NMC absolutely supports a woman's right to choose how she gives birth and who she has to support her through that birth. But we also have a responsibility to make sure that all women and their babies are provided with a sufficient level of protection should anything go wrong. You can read more about the background to this important issue on our website.

It is part of my role to advise the NMC on key midwifery issues and as a midwife, I know how deeply you care about your profession. I would really welcome your views on the issues that matter to you. I hope to have the opportunity to meet many more of you in your workplaces over the coming year.

Yours sincerely
Donna Ockenden
Midwifery Advisor
The Nursing and Midwifery Council

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