

## Reflecting on the 2017 International Day of the Midwife

I know that time is a very limited commodity for many midwives but I hope that you can take a moment today, the 2017 International Day of the Midwife, to reflect upon what a remarkable job you do.

This message is part of a regular series of communications from the NMC to registered midwives and I'd like to use this special day to update you on what has been happening in recent weeks.

In my role as Midwifery Adviser to the NMC, I have already embarked on 'shadowing midwife' visits across the UK, working alongside midwives and learning more about the issues facing the profession from a 'frontline' midwifery perspective.

Since my last email to you, I have been lucky enough to visit the maternity service at the Royal Gwent Hospital which is part of the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board in Newport, South Wales. It was here that I met a truly excellent midwife called Sarah, who impressed me with the care, compassion and expert communication skills shown to her antenatal mothers within the community. In particular, Sarah is delivering excellence in continuity of care throughout the antenatal and postnatal pathways. I also met a wonderful bereavement midwife called Kath who radiated warmth, compassion and the utmost professionalism.

There is some fantastic work taking place in Wales, including that led by the Heads of Midwifery Advisory Group, (known as HOMAG) across Wales. The HOMAG team, made up of heads of midwifery, consultant midwives

and the RCM is placing a real focus on hearing mothers' views about their care and has so far received more than 4,000 individual pieces of feedback. This feedback is being used to continually improve the care offered to mothers and babies across Wales.

I am looking forward to future visits to Scotland and Northern Ireland, which are being planned as I write. In the meantime, I wanted to tell you about some excellent progress in maternity bereavement care in England. Next month sees the launch of a new England-wide toolkit focussing on maternity bereavement. The resource, developed in partnership with NHS England, SANDS and many experienced bereavement midwives will provide the profession with pre-tested questions that will help them to ask parents about the quality of maternity bereavement care that they received.

These questions have already been fully tested with bereaved parents and bereavement midwives, so we know they will work in practice and are focussing on the areas of care that parents and midwives have told us are important. For me, this is just another example of the profession taking ownership of some of the most difficult issues it faces and, in challenging clinical scenarios, delivering the very best care for parents.

On a special day like today, it's inevitable to reflect on the current state of the profession. I know that the last year has been one of real change. As we move away from statutory supervision, midwives up and down the country are familiarising themselves with non-statutory supervision, which in all four countries seeks to retain those aspects of supervision many midwives valued. If you're unclear about anything, make sure you read our [latest guide on midwifery regulation](#).

On my travels around the UK, I have been really encouraged by the positive feedback that I've heard from midwives about the process of revalidation. Some midwives have told me that they were initially sceptical but were really surprised at how simple the new process was and how rewarding it felt to talk about and

reflect upon their professional development. I'm pleased to tell you that more than 12,000 midwives have now successfully revalidated since the launch of the new process in April 2016. If you haven't revalidated yet, don't forget that there is lots of guidance and support available through the NMC's dedicated [website](#).

I had many positive reactions to my last email and I'd like to thank everyone who got in touch. I've received many invitations to shadow midwives across the UK and I am trying to fit as many in as possible. If you have any questions or comments for me, please do [get in touch](#).

While I would be the first to acknowledge that there can be really tough moments in the profession we love, I hope that you can take a moment today to reflect on your unique contribution to midwifery in the last year, whatever your role is, and the difference you've made to mothers, babies and their families.

From everyone here at the NMC, a heartfelt thank you.

Yours sincerely  
Donna Ockenden  
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The Nursing and Midwifery Council