

# Support for parents: how supervision and Supervisors of Midwives can help you

This leaflet informs you how the supervision of midwives and a Supervisor of Midwives can directly support both you and the midwife giving you care.

## Who are Supervisors of Midwives?

Supervisors of Midwives are experienced practicing midwives who have undertaken additional education and training to support, guide and supervise midwives. Every midwife must have a named Supervisor of Midwives.

## What is the role of a Supervisor of Midwives?

Supervisors of Midwives develop and maintain safe practice to ensure protection of you, your baby and family. They meet regularly with midwives and ensure a high standard of care is provided.

The Supervisors are independent of the employer and often work in a team. Their role is different to the midwifery manager who is responsible to the employer to make sure that maternity services run effectively. The Supervisor of Midwives is accountable to the Local Supervising Authority (LSA) and is supported in their role by the Local Supervising Authority Midwifery Officer (LSA MO).

## Who is Local Supervising Authority Midwifery Officer (LSA MO)?

The LSA Midwifery Officer (LSA MO) is an experienced practicing midwife with a leadership role. They are able to give advice on the supervision of midwives as well as on midwifery practice and maternity services in general. They appoint the Supervisors of Midwives.

## What do Supervisors of Midwives do?

Supervisors of Midwives give guidance and support to both midwives and you. They support the practice of midwives and ensure that the care offered is right for you, is given in the right place, by the right person and that it will benefit you and your baby. They act as positive role models for midwives, guiding and supporting them in developing skills and expertise. If a midwife requires additional education, training and support in practice, a Supervisor can recommend a formal programme of supervised practice.

## How can Supervisors of Midwives help you?

Whilst the supervisor will support the midwife in the care she gives you, the supervisor can additionally help you by:

- **Listening and advocating** on concerns about the care you have received from your midwife. Supervisors will talk to your midwife if you are concerned or unhappy.
- **Supporting and advising** you and your midwife in your care choices e.g. place of birth
- **Creating** an environment that facilitates effective communication between you and your midwife about your care.
- **Discussing and debriefing** with you if you are unhappy with your birth outcome or treatment. If you have had a difficult or traumatic birth, a supervisor can go through your notes and discuss your experiences with you if you feel you are unable to do this with your midwife.
- **Protecting the public** by promoting safe practice and investigating concerns of health, competence, behaviour or misconduct of midwives. Supervisors can implement remedial action through supervised practice or referral to the Local Supervising Authority (LSA) and the midwives regulatory body, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).
- **Responding to your complaints or concerns** may include assisting with issues such as staff attitudes, behaviour and care received. Discussing your concerns with a supervisor does not prevent you from undertaking a formal complaints procedure with your maternity care provider or with the NMC.

## How do I contact a Supervisor of Midwives?

A Supervisor of Midwives should be available 24 hours a day and can be contacted by telephoning your local maternity unit. If you have any problems contacting a supervisor ask the maternity unit to inform the Local Supervising Authority (LSA) office and ask them to call you. Alternatively you can access the NMC web site [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org) and follow the website links to Midwifery, Local Supervising Authorities (LSAs), and Contact details of LSA Midwifery Officers (LSA MO) in the United Kingdom (UK). The LSA MO will be able to provide you with further information on how to contact a Supervisor of Midwives in your area.

## What is the role of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)?

The core function of the NMC is to establish standards of education, training, conduct and performance for nursing and midwifery and to ensure those standards are maintained, thereby safeguarding the health and wellbeing of the public. Midwives must be registered with the NMC in order to practice in the UK and are accountable to the NMC. The NMC works closely with Supervisors of Midwives, the LSA Midwifery Officers and the LSA to ensure a safe standard of midwifery practice.