

Midwife

Midwives provide care and support to women and their families while pregnant, throughout labour and during the period after a baby's birth.

This page has information on being a midwife and links to further information.

Working life

You'll mainly deal with pregnant women requiring professional support and advice. You are likely to be the lead health professional and contact for a woman, providing evidence-based information and helping her make informed choices about the options and services available throughout her pregnancy.

[Download transcript](#) ^[1].

You'll be the expert on childbirth and your responsibilities are likely to be diverse. You'll provide:

Midwifery services are increasingly moving from hospitals to the community.

- provide full antenatal care, including parenting classes, clinical examinations and screening
- identify high-risk pregnancies
- monitor women and support them during labour and the birthing process
- teach new and expectant mothers how to feed, care for and bathe their babies

You could be working with women from a variety of backgrounds and you will need to be confident enough to communicate with different people. Some women and their families might be homeless, socially excluded, have disabilities or be very young. Other clients may be from certain cultural or religious backgrounds.

All women will need you to understand the emotional, physical and psychological processes of pregnancy and birth. Sometimes pregnancies do not go to plan and you will need to offer support and advice on stillbirth, miscarriage, termination, [neonatal](#) ^[2] death and [neonatal](#) ^[2] abnormalities.

If you are working as a community midwife, you are likely to develop good professional

relationships with your families, which can make counselling easier at difficult times.

You'll often work on a rota and be on-call to provide 24-hour care at the woman's home as well as in hospital.

"Experiencing the birth of a baby as part of your day job is incredible."

Eleri Bates, Midwife at University College London Hospitals (UCLH) NHS Foundation Trust

[Read Eleri's story](#) ^[3]

Where will I work?

Midwifery services are increasingly moving from hospitals to the community, so where you work could reflect this.

Antenatal care in the community is provided in women's homes, local clinics, children's centres and GP surgeries. It can also be provided in hospitals where you may work in triage and assessment areas, high and low risk labour, postnatal wards and [neonatal](#) ^[2] units. Care during labour is provided in a mother's home, as well as midwifery led maternity units.

You'll work with a range of other professionals including [gynaecologists](#) ^[4], [GPs](#) ^[5], [health visitors](#) ^[6], [neonatal nurses](#) ^[7] and [maternity support workers](#) ^[8].

Want to learn more?

- [Find out about the entry and training requirements for midwifery](#) ^[9]
- [Find out about the personal characteristics and skills needed for midwifery](#) ^[10]
- [Find out about the training and development opportunities in midwifery](#) ^[11]
- Pay and working conditions [Expand / Collapse](#)

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the [Agenda for Change \(AfC\) pay scales](#) ^[12]. This pay system covers all staff except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. Midwives employed directly by the NHS will usually work standard hours of 37.5 per week. Community midwives could be employed by organisations providing services to the NHS such as community interest companies who do not have agreed national pay scales. Terms and conditions can vary for these employers.
- Where the role can lead [Expand / Collapse](#)

Once you have [qualified as a midwife](#), ^[13] there are a wide range of opportunities. You may want to undertake further training and become a health visitor or move into teaching or [clinical research](#). ^[14]

[Find out more about training and development in midwifery](#) ^[11]

- Job market and vacancies [Expand / Collapse](#)

There are more than 21,000 midwives employed by the NHS. There is expected to be continued growth as the number of babies being born continue to rise. In 2015, over 2600 midwifery training places are available at universities, an increase on 2014.

Most employers will advertise their job vacancies on [NHS Jobs](#) [15]. Some advertise on their own websites and in the nursing press. You can find a list of NHS employers at [NHS Choices](#) [16] and local authority employers on the [Government website](#) [17].

If you're applying for a role in the NHS or an employer offering NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the values of the [NHS Constitution](#) [18] apply in your everyday work.

[Find out more about the values.](#) [19]

- Further information [Expand / Collapse](#)
 - [Royal College of Midwives](#) [20]
 - [Nursing and Midwifery Council](#) [21]

Other roles that may interest you

- [Maternity support worker](#) [22]
- [Obstetrics and gynaecology](#) [23]
- [Health visitor](#) [24]
- [Neonatal nurse](#) [25]

Partner logos



Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/midwifery/roles-midwifery/midwife>

Links

- [1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/resources/midwifery-video-transcript>
- [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Neonatal>
- [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/midwifery/midwife/real-life-story-elieri-bates>
- [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/obstetrics-and-gynaecology>
- [5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/general-practice-gp>
- [6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/health-visitor>
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- [15] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk>

- [16] <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/about/Pages/authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>
- [17] <http://local.direct.gov.uk/LDGRedirect/Start.do?mode=1>
- [18] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NHS_Constitution
- [19] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>
- [20] <http://www.rcm.org.uk/>
- [21] <http://www.nmc-uk.org/>
- [22] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/maternity-support-worker>
- [23] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/obstetrics-and-gynaecology>
- [24] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/public-health/roles-public-health/health-visitor>
- [25] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/neonatal-nurse>
- [26] <https://www.rcn.org.uk/>