

Real-life story - Sian Hersey-Walker

Sian is a newly-qualified midwife. See her insight into the first few weeks of preceptorship and the step from student to newly qualified practitioner.

Sian Hersey-Walker

Newly-qualified midwife

Employer or university

University of Greenwich
Sian Hersey-Walker

Every newly-qualified midwife is allocated a preceptor, a named person who is your first point of contact if you want to talk things over.

How is your first job going?

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I've been here for about three weeks and am just at the end of my supernumerary period which is when you're an extra member of staff working alongside another midwife, rather than working on your own.

I had a mix of emotions before I started. I was nervous but excited at the same time because I'd trained for three years to get to this stage.

I'm starting to find my feet now and I feel more excited than anxious. I'm a bit apprehensive about the next stage of my preceptorship when I'll be making decisions and working on my own. However, we work in a team and I know there will always be the opportunity to pop out of the room to get advice from another midwife if need be.

How does your preceptorship differ from your last placement?

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It feels very different and in ways I didn't think it would. Working alongside another midwife is different to the student/midwife relationship on placement. I am expected to take the lead - the midwife beside me is merely there to guide if I'm not sure or need to ask questions. Also, when you no longer wear a student uniform, patients, doctors and other staff who don't know you're newly qualified have higher expectations of you.

What support have you received?

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In the trust I work in, every newly-qualified midwife is allocated a preceptor, a named person who is your first point of contact if you want to talk things over. This may not be the person you work with day to day but they are usually fairly newly qualified and they'll have a good understanding of how you may be feeling and what you may need to ask.

In addition, I'm one of five newly-qualified midwives so we support each other. If necessary I could also speak to the clinical practice facilitator, who I know through previous placements I have done at this trust, as she also coordinates my preceptorship.

What learning and development opportunities will there be?

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There will be training in topics we didn't cover on the pre-registration midwifery course, such as intravenous medication, suturing and blood transfusion. Once a month I'll have a study day.

- **What tips do you have for making the transition from student to practitioner?**

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Don't be afraid to ask questions – there is no such thing as a stupid question, especially if it could have an impact on patient care and safety.

Make use of the extra support around you while you are still supernumerary – soon you will be on your own.

Learn from others and pick out the best bits of practice you can adopt for yourself.

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