

# Maternity support worker

Maternity support workers assist midwives in caring for women and their babies through the vital stages of pregnancy, childbirth and the first few days of birth.

This page has information on the role of the maternity support worker, including entry requirements and skills needed.

## Working life

As a maternity support worker (MSW), you'll work under the supervision of a registered midwife [1]. MSWs are sometimes known as maternity healthcare support workers.

"I absolutely love carrying out patient care, helping and supporting women and their families with their new born babies." Katie Battersby, maternity support worker at United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

[Read Katie's story in full \[2\]](#)

In this role, you'd be:

- helping to care for mothers and babies
- making routine observations (temperature, pulse, blood pressure, breathing, etc)
- updating records and other admin tasks
- educating parents one-to-one or in groups
- taking blood samples for testing
- ordering stationery and equipment
- preparing equipment
- promoting breastfeeding
- reporting problems to a registered midwife [1] or nurse [3]

MSWs work in:

- the community
- post-natal wards
- maternity theatres
- delivery suites
- midwifery led units

You need to be able to cope with emergency situations and straightforward labour and birth.

## Entry requirements

There are no set entry requirements. Employers expect a good standard of numeracy and literacy and may ask for GCSEs or equivalent. They may ask for a qualification in health and social care, nursery nursing or childcare such as CACHE, NNEB, BTEC or NVQ.

Employers usually ask for experience of working with children and families. This can be either or paid or voluntary work. There are often posts advertised for midwifery assistants and maternity healthcare assistants. These could enable you to gain experience to apply for positions as an MSW.

## Skills and personal characteristics needed

As a MSW, you'll need to be:

- caring and patient
- able to work with people from all walks of life
- accepting of other peoples lifestyles
- physically fit
- flexible and adaptable to deal with unpredictable situations
- able to follow instructions and procedures
- willing to be present at childbirth
- able to work under pressure
- able to deal with other people?s emotions

You'll also need:

- excellent communication skills
- organisational skills

## Training and development?

You will get the training you need to do the job. This includes an introduction to the department, how to use the equipment and the procedures to follow.

You may be offered the chance to study for qualifications such as:

- the NCFE CACHE level 2 Certificate in Healthcare Support Services
- the NCFE CACHE level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support

Some MSWs join the?Royal College of Midwives [4]?(RCM). The RCM runs courses, conferences and seminars where MSWs can update their skills and network with others working in the same field.

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- Pay and conditions

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Clinical support staff working in the NHS are paid on the Agenda for Change (AfC) [5] pay system. As a maternity healthcare assistant, you will typically start on AfC [6] band 2 or 3. With experience and further training, you can apply for posts as a maternity support worker at band 4. MSWs in the

NHS work standard hours of around 37.5 a week. They often work shifts, which could involve nights, early starts, evenings and weekends. Terms and conditions will usually be different for clinical support staff working outside of the NHS.

- Where the role can lead

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With experience you could become a senior support worker. You could apply for other jobs in the wider healthcare team or you could apply to train as an assistant practitioner [7], midwife [1] or nurse [3]

- Job market and vacancies

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Most NHS trusts advertise their vacancies on NHS Jobs [8]. Some advertise on their own websites. You can find a list of NHS organisations on NHS Choices [9].

If you're applying for a role either directly in the NHS or in an organisation that provides NHS services, you'll be asked to show how you think the NHS values apply in your everyday work.

Find out more about NHS values [10].

- Further information

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- Royal College of Midwives [11]

## Other roles that may interest you

- Midwife [12]
- Healthcare assistant [13]
- Neonatal nurse [14]
- Experienced paramedic [15]

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/maternity-support-worker>

### Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/midwifery>

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/maternity-support-worker/real-life-story-katie-battersby>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing>

[4] <http://www.rcm.org.uk/>

[5] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates>

[6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC>

[7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/assistant-practitioner>

[8] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

[9] <http://www.nhs.uk/aboutnhs/howthenhsworks/authoritiesandtrusts/Pages/Authoritiesandtrusts.aspx>

[10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/working-health/nhs-constitution>

[11] <http://www.rcm.org.uk>

[12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/midwifery/roles-midwifery/midwife>

[13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/healthcare-assistant>

[14] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/neonatal-nurse>

[15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/ambulance-service-team/roles-ambulance-service/experienced-paramedic>