

"You never forget the first day you help a woman bring a new life into the world!"

Despite being advised to choose a different career path because her A-level grades weren't high enough, Olivia followed her heart and is now a successful midwifery leader.

Olivia Shelton

Community midwifery team leader

Employer or university

Mid Yorkshire NHS Teaching Trust

Salary range

£45k-£55k



How I got into the role

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After graduating with a midwifery degree from the University of Huddersfield in 2015, I moved to London to begin my career at University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust as a Preceptorship Midwife. Following the completion of the Preceptorship programme, I joined Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, where I gained valuable experience as a Caseloading Midwife. I have since returned to Yorkshire and now lead a Community Midwifery Team at Mid Yorkshire Teaching NHS Trust.

Working across various hospitals in different midwifery roles has strengthened my clinical skills and deepened my understanding of maternity care. I feel incredibly fortunate for the

diverse opportunities I have had, each of which has contributed to my growth as a midwife and now midwifery leader.

Never in my early career did I imagine I would be leading a team in a midwifery management role, and I am proud of how far I have come in my professional journey!

What I do

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As a Community Midwifery Team Leader, no weeks is the same. My days range from supporting staff through regular check-ins and caseload reviews, to attending safeguarding meetings, and stepping in to provide hands-on clinical care for women and babies when needed. I enjoy the variety this role offers, it keeps me engaged, makes me adaptable, and constantly learning! In this most recent role, I find real fulfilment in the leadership aspect of my role, particularly in mentoring and empowering midwives to deliver the best possible care to women, birthing individuals and their families!

The best bits and challenges

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I am incredibly proud of my journey to becoming a midwife, especially after being advised by a career's counsellor in sixth form college to consider a different path because my A-level grades were not high enough. It is a reminder that if you put your mind to something, you can achieve it! I deeply enjoy witnessing the transition women go through during pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal period. It is a privilege to be part of that journey with them. You never forget the first time you help a woman bring new life into the world.

Being a midwife is an exceptionally rewarding career, and I am truly grateful to have a job I love. However, it does not come without its challenges. As midwives provide a 24-hour service, I have had to work weekends, nights, and holidays, including Christmas, often missing out on family and friends' events, and staying late at work. But despite the sacrifices, nothing compares to seeing the difference you have made in a woman's life—no matter how big or small. It is those moments that make it all worth it.

Life outside work

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I am part of a social netball team, playing once or twice a week, which keeps me active and healthy. I also practice yoga regularly, especially after a long day at work, as it helps clear my mind and unwind. Recently, I have also taken up boxing, which I am really enjoying!

When I am off work, I make a conscious effort to switch off and enjoy time with friends and family, maintaining a healthy work-life balance is really important to me.

Career plans and top tips for others

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Since completing my midwifery degree, I have undertaken several continuous professional development courses to further my career. I completed a mentorship course, which enables me to teach student midwives during their training. I also earned a PG Cert in Perinatal Mental Health, which allows me to support women with their mental health during pregnancy and the postnatal period. Most recently, I completed a Professional Midwifery Advocate course, which empowers me to support staff through a continuous improvement process that enhances personal and professional resilience, quality of care, and professional revalidation.

As a midwife, key qualities such as patience, compassion, strong communication skills, and a deep commitment to the role are essential. It is also important to recognize that being a midwife can, at times, challenge your own emotional and mental resilience.

One valuable piece of advice I received early in my career was to "always care for someone as if they were your mother or sister"—providing the best care possible and greeting each person with a warm smile. It is a reminder that everyone will remember how you made them feel during this significant time in their lives.