

# Return to midwifery - FAQs

We are the NHS. We want you back. Get the answers you need and return to midwifery.

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## Why should I return to midwifery?

Now is a great time to return! Our programme will support you and enable you to renew your registration with your professional body and re-enter practice with competence and confidence. Not to forget that there are also jobs available!

We know that you already have the skills and experience that can make a big difference to patients, clients, carers and their families so we are keen to get you back.

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## What are my options?

If your registration has lapsed, you'll either complete an NMC [1]-approved return to practice course (RtP) which takes between three and 12 months or do a Test of Competence (ToC).

### **RtP course at university**

You can find the RtP midwifery courses across England on our course finder [2].

The amount of retraining you require depends on how long you have been out of practice. The longer you have been out of practice, the more practice hours you will need to complete. Suitable practice placements are sourced by the university.

### **Test of Competence (ToC)**

The test of competence is made up of:

- a multiple-choice computer-based test (CBT) and
- a practical test known as the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) [3]

If you decide to undertake the ToC, preparation is key so it is highly recommended that you are

supported by an employer who can facilitate your return to practice. If you are interested in this route, contact [returntopractice.wm@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:returntopractice.wm@hee.nhs.uk) [4] or get in touch with the relevant regional RtP lead for advice. Contact details are in the **regional contacts** section further down this page.

More information on the test, including preparation materials and how to apply is available on the NMC website [5]

### **Active registration**

If you have been out of clinical practice but your registration is still active, you can apply for a post and establish if you can be supported by a preceptorship programme. The programme will support you to update your skills and knowledge and ensure that you are job ready. Job opportunities are advertised on the NHS Jobs website [6].

These routes will support you back to the register, but there may be other actions required as outlined by the NMC readmission requirements [7].

There is a new programme for supporting midwives with an active registration to return to frontline care. Midwives who have left the NHS or clinical midwifery within the last three years can use training modules on the eLearning for Health website [8] to regain NHS experience with confidence.

This programme includes core elements of the NMC's standards, how the current health and social care systems are organised, and resources linked to the 10 maternity safety actions as outlined in the NHS Resolution Maternity Incentive Scheme [9].

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**Will my return  
to practice be  
funded?**

### **University return to practice course**

Yes, the NHS will pay your RtP course fees, clinical placement fee and a stipendiary of £1,000 to help towards travel, childcare and book costs.

### **Test of Competence**

Like the return to practice course, this route is now funded by the NHS. There is a cost for taking the test and the NHS will reimburse you for this but you may have to pay up front (cost estimated at £800-£900). You can then claim reimbursement once you have registered with the NMC [1] and are in NHS employment.

NHS funding for the return to practice programme is available for midwives who currently reside and work in England. Midwives from outside England are welcome to apply for the programme, but unfortunately funding isn't available.

For more information on this please contact [returntopractice.wm@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:returntopractice.wm@hee.nhs.uk) [4]

- **How long will it take for me to return?**

The return to practice programme can take three to 12 months to complete and is a combination of classroom and placement-based learning. The hours you spend on placement will vary, depending on how long you have been off the register. This will be negotiated with you when you apply.

For the Test of Competence (ToC), this also depends on the amount of studying and placement you require and the time to take the exam. This is on average less than a year. Further information can be found on the NMC website [5].

- **Am I guaranteed a job?**

In some areas there is an employer-led return to practice programme, where you are employed as a return to practice midwife and guaranteed a post or supported to find one once you have successfully completed the programme. Keep an eye on NHS Jobs [6] or contact your local NHS Trust(s) or your NHS Health Education England [10] local office to find out about opportunities near you.

- **I have been out of practice for a while**

The return to practice course is open to all, regardless of how long you have been out of practice. The course will update you on any new developments in midwifery and you will have support and mentoring throughout.

- **There isn't a university RtP course near me**

If you can't find a nearby course and placement, and the Test of Competence option does not work for

you, there may be a distance learning course which can help.

If you are interested in this route, contact [returntopractice.wm@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:returntopractice.wm@hee.nhs.uk) [4]

## Regional contacts

If you have further questions, you can get in touch with your regional return to practice lead by email.

- East of England [11]
- London [12]
- Midlands [13]
- North East and Yorkshire [14]
- North West [15]
- South East [16]
- South West [17]

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**Source URL:** <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/midwifery/returning-midwifery/return-midwifery-faqs>

### Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NMC>

[2] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/course-finder?field\\_leading\\_to\\_a\\_career\\_in\\_tid=3257&field\\_region\\_tid=All&field\\_qualification\\_type\\_tid=All&](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/course-finder?field_leading_to_a_career_in_tid=3257&field_region_tid=All&field_qualification_type_tid=All&)

[3] [https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Objective\\_structured\\_clinical\\_examination\\_OSCE](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Objective_structured_clinical_examination_OSCE)

[4] <mailto:returntopractice.wm@hee.nhs.uk> [5] <https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/joining-the-register/toc/toc-review/> [6] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/> [7] <https://www.nmc.org.uk/registration/returning-to-the-register/checklist-of-requirements/>

[8] [https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/Catalogue/Index?HierarchyId=0\\_58211&programmeId=58211](https://portal.e-lfh.org.uk/Catalogue/Index?HierarchyId=0_58211&programmeId=58211)

[9] <https://resolution.nhs.uk/services/claims-management/clinical-schemes/clinical-negligence-scheme-for-trusts/maternity-incentive-scheme/> [10] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/about/contact-us-0>

[11] <mailto:rtp.eoe@hee.nhs.uk> [12] <mailto:returntopractice.london@hee.nhs.uk> [13]

<mailto:rtp.mids@hee.nhs.uk> [14] <mailto:returntopractice.north@hee.nhs.uk>

[15] <mailto:returntopractice.nw@hee.nhs.uk> [16] <mailto:returntopractice.se@hee.nhs.uk>

[17] <mailto:returntopractice.sw@hee.nhs.uk>