Careers in midwifery

Join the team and make a difference
Welcome to the NHS

The NHS offers a huge range of exciting and challenging opportunities for people who are passionate about making a difference.

With more than 350 different careers on offer, there is a job for you no matter what your skills, interests or qualifications.

What’s more, you’ll be given every opportunity to build on your skills and learn new ones as part of the Career Framework – a system that demonstrates our commitment to skills development. See pages 8 and 9 for more information about this.

Scientists, accountants, midwives, porters, psychologists, nurses, information technologists and estate managers, to name but a few, are all needed to ensure the smooth running of the NHS. These people, and many more, work together as a team to deliver the very best care for our patients.

To find out more about becoming a member of the NHS team, call 0345 60 60 655, email advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk or visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

We look forward to hearing from you!

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Midwives often describe their job as ‘privileged’. The role they have in preparing women for the birth of a new life makes them a key healthcare professional during all stages of pregnancy, labour and the early postnatal period.

As well as the satisfaction it brings, the role is demanding and carries a high level of responsibility. Midwives work in all healthcare settings in a variety of ways, providing women and their families with choices and continuity of care.

Becoming a midwife means undertaking professional education at degree level. Some midwives are qualified nurses who have chosen to change career direction and undertaken the necessary extra study. Others work their way up via a range of routes before going on to study for a registered midwifery degree. Some begin their midwifery career after a first career in an unrelated field.

Midwives working in the modern NHS must be able to demonstrate the values and behaviours of 6Cs: committed; caring; courageous; compassionate; competent; and have excellent communication skills.

Once you have joined the NHS you’ll enjoy flexible working conditions, excellent benefits and a wealth of opportunities to develop your career. There are few professions that offer so much in terms of job satisfaction and support, as well as giving you the chance to enhance people’s lives during their times of need.

The NHS Careers team

For more information about working as a midwife in the NHS, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/midwifery

If you have any questions, call our helpline on 0345 60 60 655 or email advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk
The NHS – a rewarding place to work

There are few careers as rewarding as one in the NHS, or that give you the opportunity to work with such a wide variety of people.

We actively recruit people of all ages, backgrounds and levels of experience. This helps us understand the different needs of the patients we serve every day and provide the best possible service.

Whichever area you join, you become part of a talented, passionate team of people – committed to providing the best care and treatment to patients. You will also enjoy one of the most competitive and flexible benefits packages offered by any employer in the UK.

Benefits of working in the NHS
Everyone who joins the NHS is guaranteed a salary that matches their ability and responsibilities, and given every opportunity to increase it through training and development.

On top of your basic salary, you will receive at least 27 days’ holiday each year, plus a range of other benefits, including occupational health and counselling services.

Join one of the UK’s best pension schemes
The NHS Pension Scheme is one of the most generous in the UK. Every new employee automatically becomes a member and you will get an excellent package of pension benefits.

For more information about the pension, and a full list of the benefits included, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/payandbenefits

PAY AND CONDITIONS

The NHS pay system, known as Agenda for Change, offers real benefits for all directly employed staff except doctors, dentists and very senior managers, including:

- a standard working week of 37.5 hours
- holiday entitlement of 27 days a year, plus eight general and public holidays, rising to 33 days after ten years’ of service
- new pay enhancements to reward out of hours, shift and overtime working
- career and pay progression based on the application of knowledge and skills
- annual personal development review to support career aspirations.

Other benefits of working in the NHS include training, occupational health services, automatic membership of the NHS Pension Scheme (unless you choose to opt out) and study leave for sponsored courses.

To find out more about the different Agenda for Change pay bands, and see the most up-to-date starting salaries for each one, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/payrates
The NHS is committed to offering development and learning opportunities for all full-time and part-time staff.

No matter where you start within the NHS, you’ll have access to extra training and be given every chance to progress within the organisation.

You will receive an annual personal review and development plan to support your career progression.

You will be encouraged to extend your range of skills and knowledge and take on new responsibilities through the Knowledge and Skills Framework.

See pages 8 and 9 for more on the Career Framework and examples of how other employees have progressed through the NHS.
Careers in midwifery

Name: Sue Jones

Job title: midwife, Bloomsbury Birthing Centre, University College London Hospitals (UCLH) NHS Foundation Trust

Entry route: degree in midwifery

As well as caring for mothers during labour and birth, I am also there to help them during the early postnatal period.

There have been some fantastic experiences in my time as a midwife. It’s an incredibly intimate time and sometimes it amazes me just how quick and easy it is to build up a rapport with a woman in labour. One that always sticks in the mind was when a mother who had given birth at home came into the birthing centre with a thank you card. It brought back lovely memories of a wonderful and emotional birth.

Midwifery is hard work and not all experiences are as wonderful as this. On these occasions, it is important for colleagues to be supportive and then any situation is workable. The women we look after are very important to us but they also pass quite quickly through our working lives. A work colleague and friend recently said to me that a working day can be very different depending on whom you’re working with. My colleagues are caring and understanding which makes such a difference.

Sometimes it amazes me just how quick and easy it is to build up a rapport with a woman in labour.

CASE STUDY

After studying for her degree in midwifery, Sue qualified in September 2004. She says that midwifery is hard work and the role can be brutal and beautiful in equal measures.

The midwives who have inspired me in my career are all excellent communicators and decision makers. To be a midwife, you cannot be a shrinking violet. A mother needs to know that you will take control of a situation.

I did the last half of my training at UCLH and then joined as a community midwife. For the last year, I have been working at the birthing centre.
Looking after your wellbeing
The NHS is committed to improving the working lives of all staff. There is a real focus on areas that are designed to maintain employees’ health, wellbeing and safety and provide additional support to individuals when needed. These include:
- flexible working and flexible retirement
- childcare provision and support for carers in the workplace
- training and development
- coping with stress
- tackling discrimination, bullying and harassment.

As well as advice and support for people looking after sick or elderly relatives, if you work for the NHS you will also have access to a range of free childcare services, including:
- nursery care
- after-school and breakfast clubs
- holiday play schemes
- emergency care.

Managing your commitments in and out of work
The size and diversity of the NHS means we can offer you a range of flexible working opportunities.

Part-time roles and job-share opportunities are available in some jobs, as well as term time only, evening and weekend positions. We will do everything we can to help you combine your work for us with commitments in your everyday life – whether you’re studying for a new qualification, raising a family or juggling other responsibilities.

Many people take an extended break to look after young children or other dependants who need special care, or to study full time.

We will help you combine your work for us with commitments in your everyday life
Your career as a midwife

The care and expertise provided by midwives is invaluable to the thousands of women and their families who use their services in NHS clinics, hospitals and at home while pregnant, throughout labour and during the period after a baby’s birth.

As a midwife, you’ll mainly deal with women who are healthy but require professional support and advice to help them throughout pregnancy. If there are no complications, you will 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 maternity pathway.

Midwives work as part of a multidisciplinary healthcare team that includes hospital doctors, GPs, other midwives, health visitors, neonatal nurses and support staff. However, midwives also work alone. Midwives are experts and lead other healthcare professionals during normal childbirth. The responsibilities of midwives are diverse. You’ll 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. You will also teach new and expectant mothers how to feed, care for and bathe their babies before handing over their ongoing care to a health visitor between ten days and one month after the baby’s birth.

A midwife’s client base often includes women from a variety of backgrounds and you will need to be confident enough to communicate with different people. Some women and their families will have challenging circumstances – they may be homeless, socially excluded, have disabilities or be very young, in which case you may need to liaise with social services. Other clients may be from certain cultural or religious backgrounds, where high levels of empathy and intuition are important. Regardless of their situation, all women need their midwife to understand the emotional, physical and psychological processes of pregnancy and birth. When pregnancies do not go to plan, it will be up to the midwife to offer support and advice following events such as stillbirth, miscarriage, termination, neonatal death and neonatal abnormalities. Often, midwives – especially those based in the community – will develop good professional relationships with their clients due to the continuity of care involved, which makes counselling easier at difficult times.

Midwives work in a variety of healthcare settings. Current antenatal care is provided in the community, in women’s homes, local clinics, children’s centres and GP surgeries. There is also the option to be hospital based, where there are plenty of opportunities for midwives to work on antenatal departments including triage and assessment areas, high and low risk labour, postnatal wards and neonatal units. Care during labour is provided in the home birth setting, in Alongside Midwifery Units (AMUs) and Freestanding Midwifery Units (FMUs) which are all midwifery led.

By its nature, midwifery is not a nine-to-five job. Midwives often work within a rota and an on-call rota to provide 24-hour care at the woman’s home as well as in hospital.

Women-centred care
Midwifery services are woman and family centred and care is increasingly moving from hospital to a community-based environment, so where you work could reflect this. Where you work will depend on the model of care provided by the maternity service. So it could be care that’s integrated with birth centres, you might have your own caseload, or be part of a more traditional hospital service with a team of community midwives.

For information about the qualifications needed to work in midwifery, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/midwiferytraining

Midwifery services are increasingly moving from hospital to a community-based environment
Gemma has a passion for midwifery and gained extensive experience as a nursery assistant and healthcare support worker before taking a midwifery degree at the University of Bradford.

Working for 12 years on the maternity unit at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust was where I found my passion for midwifery. I started out as a nursery assistant, helping to care for the children on the unit, and then moved to a healthcare assistant role in the maternity unit where I supported the midwives and helped in theatres during Caesarean sections and other assisted deliveries. I also completed my NVQ level 2 and 3 in care.

I was keen to develop my midwifery skills and knowledge so I did an access [to university] course part time, which included getting my English and maths GCSEs. The course gave me enough UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) points to do a midwifery degree at the University of Bradford.

I qualified and registered as a midwife in 2013 and, as part of a multidisciplinary obstetric and midwifery team, I provide holistic, client-centred and culturally sensitive care to women and their families during labour and birth. I also care for women ante and post-natally, communicating effectively to provide the health education information they need.

I love providing support to women and their families during this life-changing event and helping to enhance their experience of pregnancy and childbirth. I am privileged to work with women from all backgrounds and enjoy supporting them as they adjust to life as a family according to their family’s culture and beliefs.

I feel passionate about midwifery and look forward to developing my skills and knowledge further now I’m qualified. My aim is to excel in each area of midwifery so that I’m giving the best care possible.

I am privileged to work with women from all backgrounds.
Career Framework

The Career Framework has been designed to improve career development and job satisfaction for NHS employees. It encourages individuals to learn and develop new skills and take on extra responsibilities that enable them to progress within the organisation. Many people take on additional responsibility within their own area, while others retrain and move in to different roles. The case study on page 10 describes how Karen Baker has progressed within the NHS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9 More senior staff</th>
<th>Ambulance service professions</th>
<th>Allied health professions</th>
<th>Dental care professions</th>
<th>Healthcare science</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical director of service</td>
<td>Director of therapies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Director of regional genetics services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 8 Consultant practitioners | Consultant paramedic | Consultant radiographer | | Consultant clinical scientist (medical physics) |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------||-------------|

| 7 Advanced practitioners | Advanced paramedic | Specialist speech and language therapist | | Specialist respiratory physiologist |
|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------||-----------------|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 Senior practitioners/ specialist practitioners</th>
<th>Specialist paramedic</th>
<th>Senior occupational therapist</th>
<th>Senior dental technologist</th>
<th>Senior biomedical scientist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 Practitioners</th>
<th>Practitioners Paramedic</th>
<th>Dietitian</th>
<th>Dental technician</th>
<th>Cardiac physiologist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>4 Assistant practitioners/ associate practitioners</th>
<th>Control room duty officer</th>
<th>Assistant practitioner in occupational therapy</th>
<th>Assistant dental technician</th>
<th>Critical care technologist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 Senior healthcare assistants/technicians</th>
<th>Emergency medical dispatcher</th>
<th>Rehabilitation assistant</th>
<th>Student dental technician</th>
<th>Newborn hearing screener</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2 Support workers</th>
<th>Patient transport service driver</th>
<th>Therapy clinical support worker</th>
<th>Dental nurse</th>
<th>Pharmacy dispensing assistant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| 1 Initial entry level jobs | | | | |
|---------------------------|| | | |
You can follow her career path in the white boxes on the diagram below, alongside other potential paths in the different areas of the NHS.

The diagram below gives an illustration of a variety of NHS careers and where they may fit on the Career Framework. It is not exhaustive; details on other careers can be found in the relevant booklets and on the NHS Careers website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health informatics</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Midwifery</th>
<th>Nursing</th>
<th>Wider healthcare team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Director of information management and technology</td>
<td>Director of human resources</td>
<td>Director of maternity services</td>
<td>Director of nursing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of information systems</td>
<td>Divisional director of operations for unscheduled care: strategic leadership and management of emergency care, elderly care, cancer care and medicine</td>
<td>Consultant midwife</td>
<td>Nurse consultant in stroke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development manager</td>
<td>General manager: maternity, gynaecology and fertility service: developing and managing integrated midwifery services between the community and the hospital sectors</td>
<td>Head of midwifery</td>
<td>District nurse (team manager)</td>
<td>Head of estates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-learning facilitator</td>
<td>Project manager</td>
<td>Delivery suite manager: supporting mothers during labour, delivering their babies and managing a small team</td>
<td>Community psychiatric nurse</td>
<td>Chaplain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT trainer</td>
<td>Payroll manager</td>
<td>Midwife</td>
<td>Staff nurse: providing nursing care to patients in hospital</td>
<td>Catering manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical coder</td>
<td>General office manager</td>
<td></td>
<td>Community care assistant</td>
<td>Medical secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helpdesk adviser</td>
<td></td>
<td>Maternity support worker</td>
<td>Senior healthcare assistant</td>
<td>Security officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support desk assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td>Healthcare assistant (maternity)</td>
<td>Healthcare assistant (nursing)</td>
<td>Maintenance assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health records assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nurse cadet</td>
<td>Porter</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Visit the NHS Careers website at [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/midwifery](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/midwifery)
**CASE STUDY**

**Name:** Karen Baker  
**Job title:** divisional director of operations for unscheduled care, Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust  
**Entry route:** nursing and midwifery course

Karen is the manager responsible for the emergency department, cancer care and medicine and elderly care at a major hospital trust, with more than 1,100 staff and a budget of £62 million.

When I started my career, you had to train as a nurse before becoming a midwife. But early on I realised that midwifery appealed to me most. You care holistically for people and the diagnosis and care plan you prepare is your own work. The work itself is exciting: you’re helping bring a new life into the world. There are emergency situations that get the adrenalin flowing, as well as complex cases to stretch your knowledge and skills. There’s a lot of fun, too.

I never planned the career I’ve had. I think I’ve always wanted to do a job to the best of my ability, and when I feel I’ve reached that level thought: ‘what more could I do to make a bigger difference?’

I spent ten years in a variety of hospital and community midwifery posts before becoming a delivery suite manager. Since then I have been a head of midwifery services, a general manager, associate director of midwifery and nursing services, care group manager for obstetrics and gynaecology, and divisional director of operations for women and children, before taking on my present role.

I have also been a council member with the Royal College of Midwives, taught on university courses and been involved in various national policy-making and review groups.

I guess I like a challenge – even more as my career has developed and I have seen the many challenges posed by advances in treatment and rising expectations. I have been given the opportunity and support to develop my leadership abilities.

Honestly, I can’t think of any career that beats being in the NHS. You are working alongside amazing people who are deeply committed to what they’re doing. The job satisfaction can’t be matched. You really are changing people’s lives and there are so many different directions you can take. You’re almost certain to find the thing that lights you up.

I can’t think of any career that beats being in the NHS. The satisfaction can’t be matched.
Getting started

To work in the NHS, midwives must have completed the registered midwifery training programme through an NMC-approved academic institute. The programmes are all degree level and students must pass all the theory and practice assessments and meet the good health and good character standard before being able to register and work as a midwife in the UK. You can enter the NHS at various levels, and be assured of practical, and possibly financial, support as you progress.

Who can become a midwife?
Some people apply for a place on a full-time pre-registration university course after gaining good grades at A level (or equivalent level 3 qualification) at school or college.

Others may not possess A levels but will have relevant work experience – such as experience as a healthcare assistant or associate practitioner – and be able to show evidence of academic ability, to meet a university’s requirements.

Qualified nurses can take a shortened pre-registration course in midwifery; the course takes around 18 months to complete.

Midwifery education involves a mixture of modules of academic study and placements in hospitals and the community, where you will begin working under the supervision of qualified midwives. Once qualified, midwives are responsible for keeping their knowledge up to date, and have to keep the governing body, the NMC, informed of their progress, so that they can remain on the professional register. If you decide to take an extended career break it is important that you know how to maintain your registration or that you know what to do should your registration lapse.

Whatever your entry route to midwifery, you will be able to benefit from the flexibility, support and learning opportunities offered by the NHS through all stages of your career.

Professional training
Pre-registration programmes in midwifery are provided by universities. All applicants must be numerate, literate and of good character and good health. Pre-registration degree courses in midwifery are usually three years long and comprise 50 per cent academic study and 50 per cent supervised work placements in hospitals and the community.

There are no national standard entry requirements for midwifery degrees. It is up to each university to decide what they want to accept but on the whole, degree programmes usually require applicants to have a minimum of five good GCSEs and at least two A levels (or equivalent), one of which should preferably be a science subject.

Accelerated training for registered nurses
Registered nurses can undertake a shortened programme to qualify as midwives.
CASE STUDY

Name: Aongola Ngenda

Job title: midwife, Bradford Teaching Hospitals Foundation NHS Trust

Entry route: English and psychology degree, followed by a midwifery degree

Aongola worked in various public and private sector organisations after her English and psychology degree but it was a spell in South America and some voluntary work abroad that inspired her to pursue a midwifery career.

I am currently working on the antenatal and postnatal ward. The experience is further consolidating my skills in providing holistic care within a team made up of paediatricians, obstetricians, diabetic nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and neonatal nurses, to name but a few.

A typical day involves receiving a handover from the previous shift with a history summary of each woman and baby. This includes following up anything from feeding issues and test results to working with the doctors to arrange scans, and handling any social issues. I’m currently on a ward that specialises in caring for diabetic women so I work closely with our diabetic team and obstetricians.

Postnatal care involves both ensuring mothers are physically well and providing support for their emotional wellbeing and development of their family – everything from providing feeding support and baby bath demonstrations to liaising with social workers.

I really enjoy coming to work and making a difference, in particular supporting and empowering women to make their own decisions and choices in their transition to parenthood.

I have been able to empower women to achieve a variety of birthing experiences.
Work placements and volunteering
For those with no experience of working in the health service, or whose careers have been based in non-midwifery environments, it is a good idea to spend some time making sure that it is the right career for you.

Securing a work placement will give you valuable experience. Also, work placements in midwifery settings will give you a chance to speak to people who work in the profession.

As openings for midwifery or healthcare work placements and voluntary roles vary around the country, it’s best to speak to your local NHS or voluntary organisations to see what’s available.

Support workers/assistants
Maternity support workers and healthcare assistants often don’t need recognised qualifications to do their jobs but training and development of all staff is very important. Gaining experience and appropriate vocational qualifications while working, can be a stepping stone to more senior support roles, such as maternity support workers or assistants. It can also lead to further study if they wish to pursue a career in midwifery.

Those who have worked in the NHS and have the academic ability to cope with the demands of a professional midwifery programme, will find that their experience is an advantage when they apply for a place on a midwifery degree.

Cadet schemes and apprenticeships
Some NHS organisations offer apprenticeships in health and social care, enabling apprentices to enter placements at support worker level for around two years, while giving them the opportunity to work towards a Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) qualification.

Although apprenticeships will enable a young person to work towards a QCF qualification, it will not count towards professional midwifery training. Instead, an apprenticeship aims to get an individual to the appropriate level so that he or she can apply to study a midwifery degree at the end of their apprenticeship.

For more information, about clinical support worker roles, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/clinicalsupportstaff

To search for jobs in your local area, visit www.jobs.nhs.uk
Access courses
Applicants with no formal educational qualifications can take Access to Higher Education courses, to enable them to meet the entry requirements for universities. The Access courses teach people study skills and how to deal with the academic demands of a university course. Access courses tend to be run by further education (FE) colleges and are often linked to a specific university course. In such cases, applicants may be interviewed by someone from the FE college as well as the university. Students may be guaranteed a place on a university course on successful completion of an Access course.

If you have A levels but took them some time ago, it is useful to do undertake additional study to show you can meet the academic level required, as well as demonstrating other transferable life-skills.

Foundation degree
Another way into a midwifery support role is to study for a foundation degree. This tends to be a part-time qualification, often run in conjunction with FE colleges. The foundation course lasts for two years followed by the three-year midwifery degree. People on foundation degrees are normally employed by an NHS trust.

Someone on a foundation degree could secure a healthcare assistant role whilst preparing to work their way up to a degree.

Registration
All midwifery courses are approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). You must be registered with the NMC to work as a midwife.

Funding
NHS Student Bursaries provides financial support to eligible students taking approved courses. To be eligible for financial support you must meet certain conditions.

For more information on bursaries, visit the NHS Student Bursaries website at www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students

Pay
Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) pay scales. This national pay system applies to all NHS staff except doctors, dentists and very senior managers. The NHS job evaluation system determines a points score, which is used to match jobs to pay bands and determine basic salary levels.

Your career in midwifery could start at an AfC band 2 as a maternity support worker rising to midwife consultant at a band 8a-c. Examples of other midwifery roles and the typical AfC pay bands they attract include: midwife entry level (band 5 rising to band 6); and midwife team manager (band 7).

For more information on pay and benefits, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/payandbenefits

For more information on current Agenda for Change pay rates, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/payrates

If you have no formal educational qualifications, you can take an Access to Higher Education course.
Future career options

Your midwifery qualifications and experience will open a wide range of options to develop your career in the areas that interest you most. As your knowledge and expertise increase, you could move into more senior practitioner roles such as consultant midwife. Other leadership roles within the profession include becoming a supervisor of midwives whose role is to protect the public but also support midwives in their practice. This is a key role that many midwives aspire to. Becoming a team or unit manager, you could combine responsibility for managing other staff with ongoing hands-on involvement with clients. This could then lead to further influential roles such as head of midwifery and director of midwifery services.

You may choose to specialise in a particular area of perinatal care and study for further qualifications, which may involve carrying out research to help move the profession forward. You could undertake further study to become a midwife teacher and work at a university, teaching future midwives. If you stay in practice, you could consider the role of consultant midwife, providing clinical leadership for midwives and other healthcare professionals, across maternity services.

Your career could well move through different elements of research, teaching, practice development and management – including management at board level within an NHS trust, influencing the shape of healthcare across a whole community.

You could also move into other professions, including neonatal nursing or health visiting. Neonatal nurses have a clinical focus on the treatment and care of women and babies with health complications around birth: for example, helping premature babies to get through the critical first few days after they are born.

Health visitors work with families at home and in the community, promoting good health with particular attention on young children. In effect, they take over where the community midwife’s role ends, and have a wider concern with the circumstances in which a young child is growing up.

For information about the qualifications needed to work in midwifery, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/midwiferytraining
CASE STUDY

Name: Melvin Wilkinson

Job title: labour ward lead/manager, Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust

Entry route: after working as a registered nurse

Melvin was a business studies student when a friend who worked as an A&E nurse encouraged him to look into nursing because he asked so many questions about her job. He subsequently trained to become a midwife.

As a nurse, I worked in various medical wards for a year but I enjoyed obstetrics most, so I decided to embark on a midwifery course. I studied for a diploma* in midwifery and have never looked back – I’ve just kept taking on more roles and doing more study.

After qualifying, I worked as a bank midwife at St Hellier Hospital, Surrey, while studying for a degree in health service management. I then spent a further three years as a senior midwife.

I then moved into a charge midwife post, where I coordinated services at ward level and took on other challenges in theatre – scrubbing for Caesarean sections and so on.

My role is that of labour ward lead/ward manager. My job is twofold – a ward manager for three days plus two days’ hands-on clinical work.

To be a midwife, you need to have a friendly, gentle approach, be mindful of individual women’s needs and respect their cultures. I am very open when I approach patients, and have delivered babies from different religions and cultures. If a woman prefers a female midwife, then that’s fine and her choice must be respected.

During my career, on a few occasions, I’ve been in a labour ward where women have requested to be attended by male practitioners only. On one occasion my being there encouraged a partner to stay and witness his child being born. His expression was, “thank goodness for your presence, I thought I was going to be the only man in this room”.

It is always lovely to be there when a baby is born and see the parents very happy. That personal fulfilment, having helped a mother to give birth, is tremendous. It is very rewarding to be with families at such an eventful time.

You need to have a friendly, gentle approach.

*The last intake to diploma programmes in midwifery in England was in 2008.
What’s your next step?

We hope this booklet has given you some idea of the many opportunities on offer for midwives in the NHS.

If you have decided that you want to join the NHS team as a midwife, your next step depends on your starting point. NHS Careers can provide further information on how to apply for training and you can also consult your local careers adviser.

Use the course finder on the NHS Careers website to find out which universities offer approved midwifery courses (leading to registration with the NMC). Individual universities will be able to tell you what qualities and characteristics they look for in applicants, as well as the qualifications you’ll need to get in. For example, getting some work experience is an excellent way of showing your commitment and enthusiasm. You will need to apply for the course through UCAS.

If you are considering a change of career, volunteering or shadowing an established professional in your spare time is a useful way to find out more about the field of work that you wish to pursue and can be invaluable in terms of making contacts.

Getting some work experience is an excellent way of showing your commitment and enthusiasm.

Here is a checklist of things you should be doing, whether you’re still at school, studying for your degree or looking for a change in direction:

- Have you explored routes into your chosen career? You will need to gain a degree in midwifery but could gain invaluable experience from a healthcare assistant role, or undertake the 18 month degree programme if you are already a registered adult nurse.
- Are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career?
- Have you enquired about opportunities to volunteer or do relevant work experience?
- Have you investigated further qualifications you might need for your chosen role?
- Have you searched the NHS Jobs website or spoken to your local trust to get an idea of the type of vacancies available?

Whatever position you’re in right now, the NHS Careers service can help. For more information, please call 0345 60 60 655, email advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk or visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk

To search for midwifery jobs in the NHS, visit www.jobs.nhs.uk, and for more information about professional bodies, please visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/midwiferycontacts

To find a midwifery course, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/coursefinder
Eleri Bates

**Job title:** midwife, University College London Hospitals (UCLH) NHS Foundation Trust

**Entry route:** degree in fine art, followed by degree in midwifery

Eleri graduated with a fine art degree but wanted a career with a more caring capacity. She likes being able to apply scientific knowledge, emotional and physical care and a bit of creative thinking all at once.

I was a little overwhelmed by how much there was to learn when I started my midwifery degree, but the further I progressed, the more I became sure it was a good choice for me.

I was offered a job at the hospital where I trained but chose UCLH in the end because I wanted to expand my experience. For the first year, I worked on rotation which included the labour ward, birth centre, triage, close observation bay (high dependency unit/recovery) and community midwifery. That gave me a brilliant overview of all the departments in the maternity unit and I’m now permanent on the labour ward.

Our unit has a birth centre for low risk births so on my labour ward we mainly have the high risk women who have existing medical conditions, complications with their pregnancy or babies where problems are anticipated. I generally have one woman to look after at a time throughout her labour and birth. Because we do 12-hour shifts, you get to know the mums quite well and that’s a very rewarding part of the job.

Labour and birth can include anything from self-hypnosis and birthing pools to epidurals, drips and operating theatres. A key part of the job is trying to accommodate individual plans and requests which can be challenging!

Experiencing the birth of a baby as part of your day job is incredible. But there are other rewarding moments throughout the day too like sharing some advice or information that is important to that particular individual; it gives you that feeling that you’ve improved things for someone, whether in a big or small way.

Experiencing the birth of a baby as part of your day job is incredible.
Here are some other things you can be doing, depending on where you are right now. For midwifery contact details, visit www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/midwiferycontacts

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<th>Where are you now?</th>
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| **Studying for your GCSEs** | • Visit www.stepintothenhs.nhs.uk and register for more information on chosen careers.  
• Check what your likely exam grades/results will be.  
• Explore routes into your chosen career – will you need a degree or other qualification before you join, or will the NHS train you on the job? Can you start as an assistant?  
• Are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career?  
• Enquire about volunteering or work experience.  
• Find out if you need any specific A levels, or equivalent qualifications. | Subject teachers  
Your careers adviser  
Professional bodies  
NHS Careers  
National Careers Service |
| **Studying for A levels or another course at your school or a local college** | As GCSEs, plus:  
• If you need to study a particular degree, investigate which universities offer it.  
• Find out if you need any further qualifications for your chosen role.  
• Search the NHS Jobs website at www.jobs.nhs.uk and speak to your local trust to get an idea of current vacancies. | Subject teachers  
Your careers adviser  
UCAS  
NHS Careers  
Professional bodies  
NHS Jobs  
Apprenticeships website  
National Careers Service |
| **At university** | As A levels, plus:  
• Get some advice on whether it’s a good idea, or even feasible, to switch your degree course. | University careers service  
NHS Careers  
Professional bodies  
NHS Jobs |
| **Looking for a new career** | As A levels, plus:  
• Find out if you will need to retrain before you apply for new roles or if the NHS will train you while you are working. | Careers adviser  
NHS Careers  
Jobcentre Plus  
Professional bodies  
NHS Jobs  
UCAS  
National Careers Service |
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