

Guideline for Midwives wishing to provide Midwifery care to Friend or Relative

Specialty: Maternity Services
Date Approved: July 2025
Approved by: Postnatal and TCU Forum
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Introduction:

As a Professional, you may be asked to provide care to a close friend or family member and whilst there may be no legal or regulatory reason why you may not do so, you should consider carefully the risks or benefits before entering into such an agreement. All Registered Midwives must declare that they have an indemnity arrangement appropriate for their role and the risks associated with their practice.

If employed, you should seek advice and support from your employer, particularly in relation to vicarious liability. If you provide care to a close friend or family member whilst employed, it is important you follow local policy, refer appropriately, document care given and seek additional clinical and supervisory support when required.

If acting in an independent capacity, you must hold your own professional indemnity insurance. The indemnity arrangement must provide adequate cover for any practice you undertake as a midwife in the United Kingdom. (NMC, Regulation in Practice, 2017). You remain accountable for any care given or omitted and must continue to practise within NMC The Code: Professional standards for practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives, 2018.

2. Providing care to a close relative, friend or colleague:

SBUHB has made the decision **not** to support midwives in providing care to a close relative, friend or colleague, unless this is in line with his/her normal professional midwifery duties.

SBUHB have decided on this policy for the following reasons:

- There is the potential for increased stress and emotional involvement that could possibly influence objective decision-making for any Midwife who cares for a close relative, friend or colleague during pregnancy, childbirth or in the postnatal episode.
- There is also potential for conflict that could occur in such situations and therefore a need for additional support and guidance to a Midwife.
- Whilst there are no legal or regulatory reasons to prevent Midwives from providing such care, however such a request could cause additional anxiety to the Midwife. In the unlikely event that a Midwife is asked to provide care to a close relative, friend or colleague during their shift, he/she must advise the Labour Ward Coordinator or Ward Manager of the personal connection

3. Acting in a supportive capacity to a friend or relative:

There may be occasions where midwives wish to attend the birth of a family member or friend. In these instances, Midwives must ensure that, under no circumstances, do they become involved in the provision of any clinical care. Any requirement for additional support must be escalated to the clinical team on duty in the area at the time.

[The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates - The Nursing and Midwifery Council \(nmc.org.uk\)](https://www.nmc.org.uk) **Aspects of the Code relevant to the guideline (section 2):**

20.3 be aware at all times of how your behaviour can affect and influence the behaviour of other people

20.6 stay objective and have clear professional boundaries at all times with people in your care (including those who have been in your care in the past), their families and carers

Standards pertinent which you may need to consider discussing with the team especially if a mother wants their relative to look after them:

2.1 work in partnership with people to make sure you deliver care effectively

2.2 recognise and respect the contribution that people can make to their own health and wellbeing

2.3 encourage and empower people to share in decisions about their treatment and care

2.4 respect the level to which people receiving care want to be involved in decisions about their own health, wellbeing and care

2.5 respect, support and document a person's right to accept or refuse care and treatment

4. Supporting Documents:

Nursing & Midwifery Council. (2018). *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses, midwives and nursing associates.*

Nursing and Midwifery Council. (2018). *Standards of Proficiency for Midwives.*

Nursing and Midwifery Council. (2021). *Practicing as a Midwife in the UK.*

The Royal College of Midwives. (2017). *RCM Guidance: Facilitating women's choice of midwife: Practical approaches to managing with flexibility.* The RCM.

Medical malpractice insurance. The Royal College of Midwives London

Maternity Services

Checklist for Clinical Guidelines being Submitted for Approval by Maternity Quality & Safety Group

Title of Guideline:	Guideline for Midwives wishing to provide Midwifery care to Friend or Relative
Name(s) of Author:	Claire Parkin
Chair of Group or Committee supporting submission:	Postnatal and TCU Forum
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Brief outline giving reasons for document being submitted for ratification	review existing policy
Name of Pharmacist (mandatory if drugs involved):	
Please list any policies/guidelines this document will supercede:	Guideline for midwives wishing to provide midwifery care to Friend or Relative (November 2023)
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