

Future Midwife Consultation  
Education & Standards  
Nursing and Midwifery Council  
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30 April 2019

Dear Members of the Nursing and Midwifery Council,

**Re: NMC Future Midwife Consultation**

I write on behalf of the London Healthcare Education Group, which represents the Deans of Health across London. As you will know, London's HEIs collectively educate about one in every five midwives in the UK, contributing around 500 midwives to the workforce each year.

Our scale means that we are not only educating midwives for London's needs, but for the needs of the nation. The national picture is one of increasing focus on localities, where the skills of health professionals reflect the needs of their communities. We want a midwife educated in London to be as able to deliver care in a rural setting as in an urban environment, but this requires a firm foundation in the core competencies that permit midwives to act as autonomous and accountable health professionals.

Our core concern is that while it is encouraging to see more weight given to the midwife's role in the totality of care, the scope as expressed in the standards, particularly in domains 2 and 3, is too far-reaching. Midwives should, of course, be equipped with the principles of human rights and other rights expressed through legislation. We also agree that they will also need a firm understanding of how to collaborate with other professionals, including social prescribers, who deliver statutory and non-statutory services to the mothers they support - before, at and after birth.

We feel, however, that the place for detailed understanding for many of the issues, particularly those listed in domain 3, are best delivered with the context of a locality and after registration. As you will know, London has five STPs, each with their own approach to the system of health and care delivery. Even if our students remain in London, they will need to be resilient enough to respond to differences in the way localities shape and deliver their care offer, as well as what they expect out of specific roles and functions.

What we would therefore like to see is a set of standards with more emphasis on the clinical and critical thinking skills that rightly precede registration, with a view to expand and enhance understanding of specific cultural and care issues once in employment. We are encouraged by the work of Capital Midwife in developing a preceptorship framework that is right for London, and we hope to see more emphasis given to quality preceptorships on a national level as well. When employers commit to the development of midwives, we know that midwives grow in confidence, remain motivated, and learn to lead.

We also feel that a streamlined and more principles-led approach to the standards is in better keeping with our ethos as higher educators. Our role is to develop the thinking that advances the profession just as much as it is to impart specific skills. In London, we have the luxury of being able to cover the requirements in the proposed standards (we question if our more rural colleagues would be able to do the

same), but we ask if we should. We also ask whether we'll be able to assure the quality of the breadth of proposed requirements, particularly to the standard required by the Future Nurse quality assurance process without adversely impacting education delivery.

We do also hold reservations about the clinical aspects of the proposed standards, but we will defer to the London Lead Midwives for Education Group, with whom we consulted as part of our response. They will address these reservations in their own response.

Of course, we appreciate our view is one of many you will need to consider. If you would, however, like to speak with us directly and address our comments in more detail, we welcome this. You are welcome to contact Lydia Dye-Stonebridge at [Lydia.dye-stonebridge@londonhigher.ac.uk](mailto:Lydia.dye-stonebridge@londonhigher.ac.uk) who will be able to convene a call or a face-to-face meeting.

With kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W Turner', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Professor Warren Turner**

*Chair, London Healthcare Education Group, and Dean of School of Health and Social Care, London South Bank University*