

**NHS**

*Careers*

## Careers in midwifery

Join the team and  
make a difference



North York  
NHS  
REGISTERED MID

# 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 300 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](mailto:advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk) or visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)**

We look forward to hearing from you!

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# Foreword

Midwives often describe their job as 'privileged'. The role they have in preparing women for the delivery of new life makes them a vital presence during all stages of pregnancy, labour and the early postnatal period.

As well as the satisfaction it brings, this unique role is demanding and carries plenty of responsibility. More midwives now work in the community, providing services in women's homes, local clinics, children's centres and GP surgeries. There is of course the option to be hospital based, where there are plenty of opportunities for midwives to work on antenatal, labour and postnatal wards and neonatal units.

Becoming a midwife means undertaking professional education at degree level. Some midwives are qualified nurses who have chosen to change career direction and undertake the extra study necessary to register as a midwife. Others begin their career by working their way up via a range of routes (for example from support roles, which require no

qualifications) before going on to study for a registered midwifery degree. Some begin their midwifery career after a first career in an unrelated field.

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/list/working](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working)

**If you have any questions, call our helpline on 0345 60 60 655 or email**  
[advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk](mailto: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 and comprehensive 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/list/payandbenefits](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/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 10 years of service
- new pay enhancements to reward out of hours, shift and overtime working
- better 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/list/payandbenefits](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits)**



## FULFIL YOUR POTENTIAL

- 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.**

### CASE STUDY

**Name:** Melvin Wilkinson

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

**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 studies.

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 co-ordinated 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. You need to always have the woman's wishes at heart, especially where she has a birth plan. I am very open when I approach patients, and have delivered patients 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".

The rewards are brilliant – 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.

*\*The last intake to diploma programmes in midwifery in England was in 2008.*

### Looking after your well-being

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, well-being 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.

**You can find out more about the benefits of working in the NHS at [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits)**

### 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 often 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**

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.

**Get more information about flexible working opportunities at [www.nhsemployers.org/flexible](http://www.nhsemployers.org/flexible)**



# 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 main health professional contact for a woman, helping her make informed choices about the options and services available during pregnancy.

Midwives work as part of a multidisciplinary healthcare team that includes hospital doctors, GPs, other midwives, neonatal nurses and support staff but you could 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 classes, clinical examinations and screening, identify high-risk pregnancies, monitor women and support them during labour and the birthing process. You will also teach women – particularly new mothers – how to feed and bathe their babies before handing over care to a health visitor after around one month following the baby's birth.

As a midwife's client base includes women from all walks of life, you will be confident enough to communicate with all types of people. Some women and their families will be from challenging backgrounds – they may be homeless, socially excluded, have disabilities or be very young, in which case you may liaise with social services. Other clients may be from certain cultural or religious backgrounds where high levels of empathy and intuition are just as important. Regardless of background, all women will 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 you 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 – can develop good professional relationships with their clients due to the continuity of care involved, which makes counselling easier at difficult times.

By its nature, midwifery is not a nine-to-five job. Midwives usually work on an on-call rota so that they can provide 24-hour care, at the woman's home as well as in hospital.

### Women-centred care

As midwifery services are increasingly moved from hospital to community, the settings in which you could work will reflect this. Some midwives, however, will choose to remain working in hospital maternity units – antenatal, labour and postnatal wards – while others will work in community and GP clinics, and birthing centres.

There is an increasing trend for midwives to work as part of a team, following their clients from the day they become pregnant through to the birth of their child, or managing a caseload of clients in a specific geographic area.

**For information about the qualifications needed to work in midwifery, see the 'Getting started' section on page 11 or visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications)**

You will be the main health professional contact for a woman, helping her make informed choices about the options and services available during pregnancy

## CASE STUDY

**Name:** Alison Meinel

**Job title:** Sure Start midwife, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, north London

**Entry route:** after working as a registered nurse

**Alison worked as a nurse for a year before applying to do a degree in midwifery. She says the variety of opportunities for NHS midwives can be daunting but allowed her to direct her own career path.**

When I first qualified, I worked on wards – postnatal, antenatal and labour wards – and in clinic. I then helped with the formation of a caseload team that focused on the community. After taking someone on at booking, we did all their antenatal visits, and were on call for them when they went into labour, so it was 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I worked with a partner so one of us was always available.



I did that for two or three years and worked quite closely with a Sure Start midwife, which is how I got to know about the scheme. It's a government programme that brings together, early education, childcare, health and family support. I applied for a post when one became vacant. My role now is based within a children's centre, where I run antenatal classes, aqua-natal classes, baby massage classes and a support group for antenatal and postnatal women so they can meet informally.

I also do outreach work with those in temporary accommodation – such as travellers – who may have been missed by the system. I do postnatal support visits, so if somebody lives in our area and just wants to have a chat with a midwife, I am there rather than them having to wait for an appointment.

There are many different avenues you can go down depending on your special interests. When I started this job, I was given a blank piece of paper and it was up to me to get on with it – great in some ways but daunting in others. You have to be really self-directed and motivated.

It's the sort of job that you can't enter lightly – it is often called a vocation – but on the plus side there are not many other jobs where you can get this kind of satisfaction, where someone looks into your eyes and says "thank you", and you know that you've helped them on that journey. It isn't just about delivering babies, it is so much more.

# Career Framework

The Career Framework has been designed to improve career development and job satisfaction for NHS employees.

It encourages individuals to learn 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.

	Ambulance service professions	Allied health professions	Dental care professions	Healthcare science
<b>9 More senior staff</b>		Director of therapies		Director of regional genetics services
<b>8 Consultant practitioners</b>		Consultant radiographer		Consultant clinical scientist (medical physics)
<b>7 Advanced practitioners</b>		Specialist speech and language therapist		Specialist respiratory physiologist
<b>6 Senior practitioners/ specialist practitioners</b>	Emergency care practitioner	Senior occupational therapist	Senior dental technologist	Senior biomedical scientist
<b>5 Practitioners</b>	Paramedic	Dietitian	Dental technician	Cardiac physiologist
<b>4 Assistant practitioners/ associate practitioners</b>	Control room duty officer	Assistant clinical psychologist	Dental therapist	Critical care technologist
<b>3 Senior healthcare assistants/technicians</b>	Emergency medical dispatcher	Rehabilitation assistant	Dental hygienist	Newborn hearing screener
<b>2 Support workers</b>	Patient transport service driver	Therapy clinical support worker	Dental nurse	Pharmacy dispensing assistant
<b>1 Initial entry level jobs</b>				

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.

Framework. It is not exhaustive; details on other careers can be found in the relevant booklets and on the NHS Careers website.

The diagram below gives an illustration of a variety of NHS careers and where they may fit on the Career

**Visit the NHS Careers website at [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working)**

Health informatics	Management	Midwifery	Nursing	Wider healthcare team
Director of information management and technology	Director of human resources	Director of maternity services	Director of nursing	
Pictures archiving communication manager	<b>Divisional director of operations for unscheduled care: strategic leadership and management of emergency care, elderly care, cancer care and medicine</b>	Consultant midwife	Nurse consultant in stroke	
Clinical researcher	<b>General manager: maternity, gynaecology and fertility service: developing and managing integrated midwifery services between the community and the hospital sectors</b>	Head of midwifery	District nurse (team manager)	Head of estates
Systems analyst	Project manager	<b>Delivery suite manager: supporting mothers during labour, delivering their babies and managing a small team</b>	Community psychiatric nurse	Chaplain
Librarian	Payroll manager	Midwife	<b>Staff nurse: providing nursing care to patients in hospital</b>	Catering manager
Clinical coder	General office manager		Community care assistant	Medical secretary
Medical records clerk		Maternity support worker	Senior healthcare assistant	Security officer
Support desk assistant		Healthcare assistant (maternity)	Healthcare assistant (nursing)	Maintenance assistant
Health records assistant			Nurse cadet	Porter

### 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 1100 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 hold a 'pre-registration' qualification in midwifery at degree level, which allows them to register with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). 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 course after gaining good grades at A level (or equivalent) at school or college.

Others may not possess A levels but will have relevant work experience – such as time spent as healthcare assistants or associate practitioners – and be able to show evidence of academic ability, which can be enough to meet a university's requirements.

Qualified nurses can take a shortened pre-registration course in midwifery; the course lasts for around 18 months.

Midwifery education involves a mixture of modules of academic study and placements in hospitals and the community, where you will begin to work under the supervision of qualified midwives, whilst in midwifery areas. 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 the registration is not allowed to lapse otherwise you will not be able to practice.

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 at least 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 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:** Rachel Cox

**Job title:** postnatal ward midwife, Southmead Hospital, North Bristol NHS Trust

**Entry route:** direct entry through diploma course

**Rachel joined a midwifery diploma course straight after leaving school at the age of 18. She benefited from excellent mentoring and values the teamwork.**

From quite a young age, I'd liked the idea of being in a hospital and helping people. My problem was that I wasn't sure about looking after people who were actually ill! So I worked out that the best job for me would be as a midwife, and set my sights on that.

I got the GCSEs I needed and then took A levels that I knew would help me later: biology and English language. I wanted to stay in Bristol and the only course available at the time was a diploma at the University of West of England. Fortunately, I convinced the interview panel that I was committed to this career.



In my student group there was only one other girl my age, all the rest were older. The first few days on a labour ward felt quite scary. I was in a different world with its own rules and atmosphere, even its own language, so I stuck very close to my tutors and mentors who were excellent. I wanted to become like them.

Some of those mentors I now work alongside as colleagues, which gives me a great sense of how much I've learned and how far I've come. I have added a teaching and assessing qualification to my diploma, and plan to step up to degree level soon.

During the diploma course we did placements in the community as well as hospital. After qualifying five years ago, I opted to work on a hospital labour ward. I like the constant contact with other healthcare professionals, and the set shift patterns protect your time outside work.

I cried at the first birth I attended – I don't do that any more, but the emotional impact is still there every time. As in any job there are pressures and days when things don't go right but I'm doing a job I love. To be where I am now and have this positive feeling about my job, I'm a very lucky person.

**I like the constant contact with other health professionals, and the set shift patterns protect your time outside work**

*The last intake to diploma programmes in midwifery in England was in 2008.*

### 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

Support workers and healthcare assistants often don't need set qualifications to do their jobs but gaining experience and appropriate vocational qualifications while working can be a stepping stone to more senior support roles, such as midwifery support workers or assistants, as well as 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 course will find that their experience is an advantage when they apply for a place on a midwifery degree, which will normally be part-time and last for five or six years.

**For more information, see our clinical support worker factsheet or visit**

**[www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/working)**

**To search for jobs in your local area, please visit [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk)**



### 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 part-time midwifery degree – which usually lasts five or six years – at the end of their apprenticeship.

## 14 Careers in midwifery

### Access courses

Applicants with no formal educational qualifications can take Access to Higher Education courses, which teach skills around study and confidence in how to deal with the academic demands of a university course. Access courses tend to be run by further education (FE) colleges around the country – 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.

### Foundation degree

Another way in to midwifery 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.

**For more information on training in the NHS, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/training)**

**For more information about professional bodies and other contacts, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts)**

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

### 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.

You can visit the NHS Student Bursaries website at [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/students) for more information about financial support.

### Pay

Most jobs 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 clinical support worker (nursing) rising to midwife consultant at a Band 8a-c. Examples of other roles and the typical AfC pay bands they attract include: maternity care assistant (Band 4); 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/list/payandbenefits](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/payandbenefits)**



## Future career options

Your midwifery qualifications and experience will open a wide range of options to develop your career in the directions that interest you most. As your knowledge and expertise increase, you could move into more senior practitioner roles. Becoming a team or unit manager, you could combine responsibility for managing other staff with ongoing hands-on involvement with clients.

You may choose to specialise in a particular area of perinatal care and study for further qualifications. As part of this process you might carry out research that helps move the profession forward. You could become attached to a university and be involved in teaching future midwives. If you stay in practice, you could consider the role of consultant midwife, which provides clinical leadership for midwives and others 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 nursing, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/qualifications)**



## CASE STUDY

**Name:** Sue Jones

**Job title:** midwife, Bloomsbury Birthing Centre, University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

**Entry route:** following a three year degree course in midwifery

**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 have been working at UCLH for the past five and a half years. I did the last half of my training here and then joined as a community midwife. For the last year I have been working at the birthing centre. As well as caring for mothers during labour, I am also there to help them during the birth and the early postnatal period, for example supporting them in establishing breastfeeding.

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.

## What's your next step?

We hope this booklet will have 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.

If you need a degree, use the coursefinder on the NHS Careers website to find out which universities offer approved midwifery courses (leading to registration with the NMC). The individual universities will be able to tell you what qualities and characteristics they look for in applicants. 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 you could work your way up from healthcare assistant roles, or could convert from nursing.
- 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](tel:0345 60 60 655), email [advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk](mailto:advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk) or visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)**

**To search for midwifery jobs in the NHS, visit [www.jobs.nhs.uk](http://www.jobs.nhs.uk), and for more information about professional bodies, please visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts)**

## CASE STUDY

**Name:** Joy Kirton

**Job title:** midwife, Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Trust

**Entry route:** after working as a registered nurse

**Joy qualified as a midwife in 1981 but left the profession three years later to set up her own business. She missed the caring side of midwifery and returned to practice 15 years later.**

To be a midwife, common sense, a good sense of humour, being a team player and communication skills are all important. A good midwife also knows their limitations and when it is time to call for help.

As part of our mandatory study days, all midwives need to be up to date on procedures for obstetric



emergencies. I am part of the team that updates them on these issues. I am also part of the Basildon's Perineal Repair Team which teaches midwives from Basildon and other hospitals how to suture.

Many midwives specialise in certain areas but I enjoy all aspects of the role. For me, the best thing about being a midwife is the variety of the role as I love doing lots of different things. At the end of each day, it is also great to see a happy, healthy mother and baby leaving the ward. Working with a good team is also paramount. In an emergency, and when things get tough, it is good to know you have the support of your colleagues.

In my early career, I trained as a nurse and later trained as a midwife and qualified in 1981. At the time you had to be a nurse before becoming a midwife and you didn't need a degree.

I left the NHS in 1984 to set up my own business with my sister but I found myself in a management role and attending a lot of meetings. I missed the hands-on, clinical side of midwifery so returned to practice in 1999 and I had to undertake some study sessions at degree level. I think I'll be in the NHS until I retire. It is a stable environment and there is a good pension. There are also lots of career opportunities and scope for training. And because I have been in the NHS so long, I also get lots of holiday every year!

## 20 Careers in midwifery

Here are some other things you can be doing, depending on where you are right now. For all contact details, visit [www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/list/contacts)

Where are you now?	What should you do now?	Who can help?
Studying for your GCSEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit <a href="http://www.stepintothens.nhs.uk">www.stepintothens.nhs.uk</a> and register for more information on chosen careers.</li> <li>• Check what your likely exam grades/results will be.</li> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Are there any particular skills or experience that will improve your chances of getting into your chosen career?</li> <li>• Enquire about volunteering or work experience.</li> <li>• Find out if you need any specific A levels, or equivalent qualifications.</li> </ul>	Subject teachers Your careers adviser Professional bodies NHS Careers
Studying for A levels or another course at your school or a local college	<b>As GCSEs, plus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If you need to study a particular degree, investigate which universities offer it.</li> <li>• Investigate any further qualifications you might need for your chosen role.</li> <li>• Search the NHS Jobs website at <a href="http://www.jobs.nhs.uk">www.jobs.nhs.uk</a> and speak to your local trust to get an idea of current vacancies.</li> <li>• Consider the option of an apprenticeship locally.</li> </ul>	Subject teachers Your careers adviser UCAS NHS Careers Professional bodies NHS Jobs Apprenticeships website
At university	<b>As A levels, plus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take advice on whether it's a good idea to switch your degree course.</li> <li>• Complete your current degree and look for post-graduate courses in midwifery.</li> </ul>	University careers service NHS Careers Professional bodies NHS Jobs
Looking for a new career	<b>As A levels, plus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	Careers adviser NHS Careers Jobcentre Plus Professional bodies NHS Jobs UCAS

**FOR FURTHER COPIES OF THIS BOOKLET PLEASE CONTACT:**

**NHS Careers**

**PO Box 2311**

**Bristol BS2 2ZX**

**Tel: 0345 60 60 655**

**email: [advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk](mailto:advice@nhscareers.nhs.uk)**

**[www.nhscareers.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscareers.nhs.uk)**

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