



Royal College
of Midwives

midwifery in scotland

Five year plan for the profession

Introduction

Our ambition for Scotland: All midwives and maternity support workers (MSWs) in Scotland feel valued and can give the highest standard of individualised care to women, newborns and families. They are working in safe workplaces with supportive cultures that enable them to thrive and develop at every stage in their career.

The unprecedented response to RCM Scotland's survey of members in 2022 - 39% of members in stark contrast to 1-2% in previous UK-wide surveys - reflected the challenges that midwives currently face but also the value of taking a different approach.

In developing this five-year plan for the midwifery profession in Scotland, the RCM has consulted broadly to ensure that we

are reflecting the ambition of the whole profession. It builds on the foundation of the survey, evidencing that not only are midwives and MSWs being listened to but that there is commitment to coproducing the changes required to achieve the ambition of this plan. The role of the RCM in Scotland is not to direct but to facilitate through supporting, promoting and influencing on behalf of the profession. This plan provides a broad framework for aligning the shared ambitions of maternity professionals, the Scottish Government, the regulator, territorial and special boards, NHS Education Scotland and Health Improvement Scotland to ensure that midwifery and maternity care are safe, sustainable, future focused and always compassionate.

In order to drive this forward, a strategic midwifery leadership group is being developed with representation from across the profession. This will be chaired by Scotland's Chief Midwifery Officer and facilitated by RCM Scotland.

The key themes of this plan are not exhaustive but aim to triangulate what we have heard from the profession, considering key strategy

This plan provides a broad framework ... to ensure that the maternity care and midwifery are safe, sustainable, future focused and always compassionate.

documents and recommendations from reviews from across the UK. The focus is on bringing together those areas specific to the profession - namely cultures, safety, career pathways and leadership - that should be moving forward but require additional professional focus.

Without a plan, midwifery in Scotland risks not realising its full potential to meet the

individualised health needs of maternity service users across the perinatal period. It will also fail to realise its full public health role in terms of prevention, early intervention and improving outcomes. In order to be future-focused and prepared in an ever-changing world the profession needs to be proactive in the ambition for career frameworks and pathways that will meet the clinical, education, research and leadership needs to deliver on current and future policy and population demand. This can only be achieved in a workplace culture where midwives feel psychologically safe. We know that psychological safety is important not only for the wellbeing and retention of staff but also because it impacts on safety in maternity care.

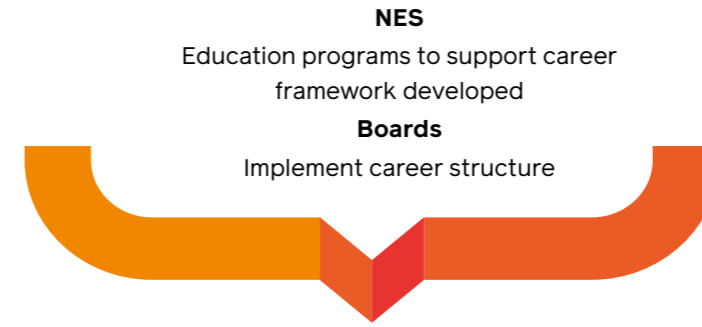
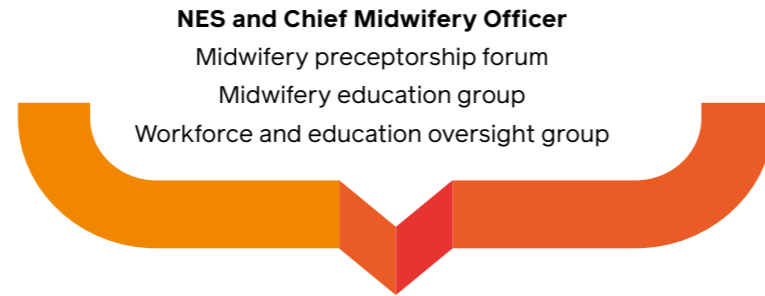
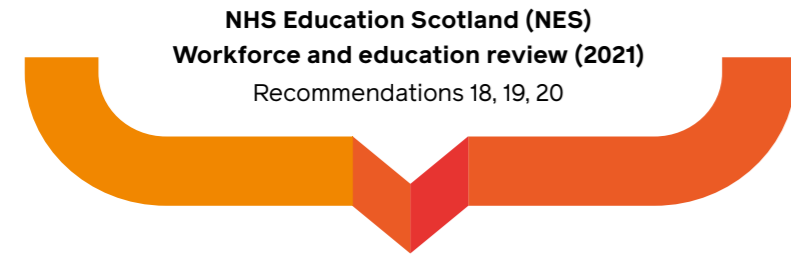
While this is specifically a plan for the midwifery profession, midwifery does not work in isolation. It must be acknowledged that maternity care is provided by the multidisciplinary team.

Jaki Lambert
Director, RCM Scotland



Career structure

Policy drivers



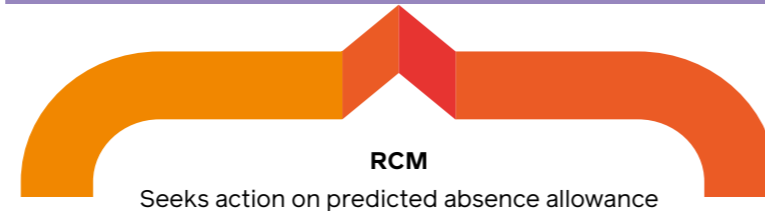
Baseline

- 2022**
RCM survey 2022 and listening events
- Lack of development opportunities
 - Limited career progression
 - Lack of support for early career midwives
 - No national midwifery preceptorship programme
 - No midwifery specific career framework
 - Lack of midwifery specific practice education facilitators (PEFs) and clinical educators
 - Midwifery proficiencies (NMC 2019) not fully embedded
 - Job descriptions do not reflect current roles or proficiencies
 - No clear career pathway for research and education.
 - Retiring of midwifery researchers and educators
 - Retiring of experienced midwives

Aims and objectives

- 2023**
- NHS boards have midwifery-specific practice education posts to support the practice learning environment (delivering education and clinical skills development in practice)
 - A nationally agreed preceptorship programme is in place that supports them to consolidate essential skills and competencies while developing professional confidence and resilience
 - A national midwifery career framework, (band 2-9) There is a parallel education framework in place relevant to role
 - Subgroup set up to update job descriptions to reflect current roles and identify gaps (year 1-2)

Professional inputs



- 2024**
- Learning environment supports midwives, maternity support workers (MSWs) and MCAs to develop from bands 2-9
 - All roles have consistent orientation/ preceptorship with mentor to support
 - Job descriptions accurately reflect roles and levels of practice and have gone through formal job evaluation processes
- 2025**
- All students and early career midwives have access to the support of midwifery specific Practice Education Facilitators and clinical educators in practice learning environment
 - All newly qualified or new to post midwives have access to a midwifery preceptorship program
 - Midwives can access the learning programs that will support career development

What success looks like - 2026

- Retention of students and early career midwives
- Good support for early career midwives
- There is a well evaluated preceptorship programme in place
- Midwives feel supported when new to role with supportive induction and mentorship
- All midwives say they have access to a career structure across all pillars of practice that builds on the core proficiencies of the midwife
- There are clear pathways for clinical academic careers, education, and research
- Midwives feel they have opportunities to develop



Compassionate leadership

Policy drivers

NES

- Workforce and education review (2021)
- Recommendation 6, 20

NES and Chief Midwifery Officer

- Midwifery preceptorship forum
- Midwifery education group
- Workforce and education oversight group (recommendation 21)

NES

- Education programmes to support career framework developed
- ## Scottish Government
- Safe staffing legislation implementation

Baseline

2022

RCM survey 2022

- 4/14 Boards have Directors of Midwifery
- 2/14 Boards have consultant midwives
- Variation in structures
- No current midwifery leadership development framework
- Scoping of leadership needs across levels of practice.
- Currently no forum for hearing the voice of midwives in every level of the midwifery profession
- Variation in where Lead Midwife for Education sits in university structures

Aims and objectives

2023

- Share local leadership structures
- Share current leadership development opportunities within Boards
- Membership and frequency of Strategic Midwifery Leadership Group agreed
- Identify representatives for the networks
- Workplace representative on Strategic Midwifery Leadership Group
- Start to develop local networks to feed into national networks using improvement methodology

2024

- Leadership pillar implemented as part of career framework
- Heads of Midwifery continue to develop and facilitate networks across levels/ areas of practice

2025

- There are midwifery workforce opportunities for career progression that support the development of future leaders across all areas of midwifery
- There are visible leaders being identified and developed across Scotland
- All leadership reflects principles of compassionate leadership

Professional inputs

RCM

- Collate job descriptions from across Scotland
- Shared RCM survey national and board reports
- Leadership listening events

RCM

- RCM Scotland leadership report
- Facilitate Strategic Midwifery Leadership Group
- RCM Band 7 development scoping
- Annual Think Tank

RCM

- RCM annual conference
- Develop networks across Boards to feed into Strategic Midwifery Leadership Group representing all levels of the profession
- Annual think tank

RCM

- Annual Think Tank

What success looks like - 2026

- All midwives see themselves as leaders
- Midwives know how to access leadership development relevant to their current roles
- There is an increase in Directors of Midwifery
- Agreed midwifery leadership structure
- Midwives feel there is access to visible clinical leadership
- There is succession planning
- Leadership promotes culture of safety

Evaluated by
RCM member survey



Culture

NES

- Workforce and education review (2021)
 - Recommendation 6, 9
- Race Equality Framework Scotland

NES and Chief Midwifery Officer

- Midwifery preceptorship forum
- Midwifery education group
- Workforce and education oversight group (recommendation 21)

Scottish Government

- Safe staffing legislation implementation
- Scotland's Fair work framework

2022

RCM survey 2022

National 'iMatter' report does not disaggregate nursing and midwifery

- Midwife stress
- Midwives feeling unsupported
- 75% of midwives considered leaving
- Midwives raised dignity at work concerns
- Lack of flexible working
- High sickness absence
- Benchmark against Caring for You charter

2023

- Caring for You charter signed off
- Action plans are co-produced to address culture utilising based on workforce and education culture driver diagrams
- Identify, develop and embed structures and forums for coproducing change
- Scope available resources
- Engage multidisciplinary team in local action plans
- Link to essentials of safe care
- Documentation reflects ReBirth study

2024

- Implement and share successes and challenges and resources with and across all networks
- Agree measures for cultures in maternity care

2025

- Positive inclusive cultures visible within Essentials of Safe Care with agreed measures

RCM

- Collate job descriptions from across Scotland
 - Undertook survey
- Shared national and board reports
 - Leadership listening events

RCM

- Scotland leadership report
- Facilitate Strategic Midwifery Leadership Group

RCM

- National conference to share successes and good practice
- Develop networks across Boards to feed into Strategic Midwifery Leadership Group representing all levels of the profession

What success looks like - 2026

- Midwives and MSWs experience more positive, enjoyable, rewarding and productive working environments.
- The recommendation is in line with Scotland's Fair Work Framework,
- Midwives and MSWs report working in supportive workplaces with, compassionate cultures where there is clear autonomy, belonging and ability to contributeⁱⁱⁱ
- Sickness absence rates reduced
- Retention rates stable
- I matter

Evaluated by
RCM member survey
and State of Maternity
Services report



Safety

Policy drivers

Scottish Government

- Safe staffing legislation implementation
- Excellence in care (EIC)
- Race Equality Framework

Health Improvement Scotland

- Essentials of Safe Care
- Scottish patient safety program (SPSP)

NES

- Workforce and education review

Health Information Scotland

- SAER supplementary guidance

NES

- Clinical supervision

Scottish Government

- Safe staffing legislation implementation

Baseline

2022

RCM survey and listening events 2022

- Digital platforms challenging midwives' documentation and time to care
- Workload tool not fit for purpose
- Shortfall in midwifery workforce
- No nationally agreed quality indicators for maternity
- Lack of consultant midwives
- Lack of clinical educator and midwifery specific PEF roles to support early career midwives
- Clinical supervision not embedded across Scotland
- Unable to meet core mandatory training
- Lack of dedicated time to learn
- No definition of key roles to maintain safe service outside direct clinical care

Aims and objectives

2023

- Completed baseline against Essentials of Safe Care and language embedded in practice
- Share best practice for midwifery risk and improvement roles and guidance development
- Share best practice how supporting midwives and MCAs to recover
- Share professional escalation good practice
- Midwifery contributes to perinatal network guideline development
- Share best practice regarding models of clinical supervision
- Midwives working in clinical governance roles have access to educational preparation to support undertaking reviews, sharing learning and working with families.

2024

- Implement and share improvement and challenges and resources
- Provide space for midwifery aspects of safety and Improvement work

2025

- Implement and share improvement and challenges and resources
- Essentials of Safe Care are embedded, and improvement is through lens of Essentials of Safe Care
- PEF/clinical educators are available to support midwives in clinical practice across all settings

Professional inputs

RCM

- Collate risk management and quality improvement job descriptions from across Scotland
 - Undertook survey
- Shared national and board reports
 - Leadership listening events
 - Race Matters

RCM

- Representing profession and workforce on Healthcare Staffing Programme (HSP) program board, safe staffing implementation, Excellence in Care programme board, Maternity Care Quality improvement Collaborative (MCQIC) programme board
 - Identify key roles that support safe care
- Facilitate Strategic Midwifery Leadership Board

RCM

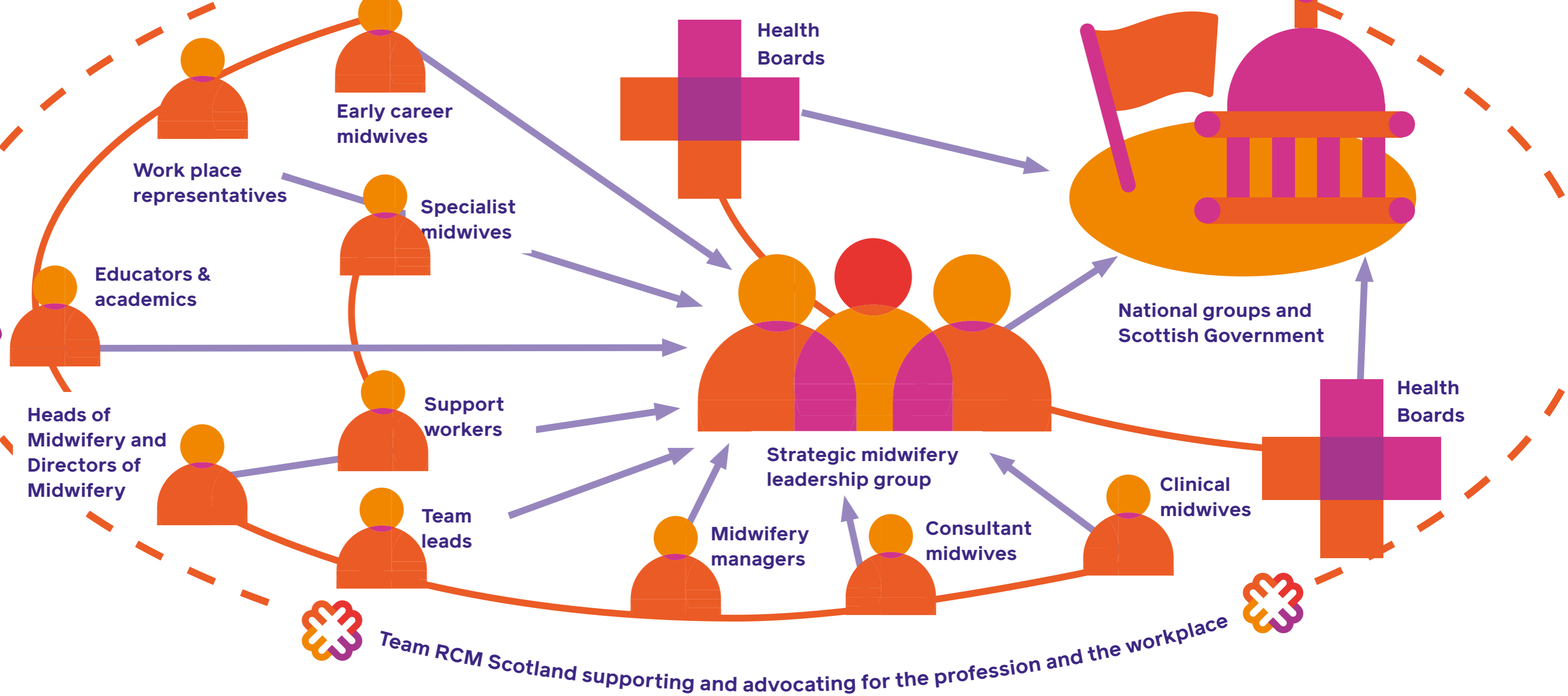
- RCM national conference to share successes and good practice
- Develop networks across Boards to feed into Strategic Midwifery Leadership Group representing all levels of the profession

What success looks like - 2026

- Midwives say that there is safe staffing in their workplace
- Midwives feel psychologically safe in workplace
- There are clear quality measures for maternity services
- Voice of midwifery can provide assurance at Board level
- Recognition in workload planning for midwives to undertaken reviews and share learning
- Midwives with clinical governance roles have appropriate learning programs and access to mentoring and support
- All midwives regularly access clinical supervision
- Midwives contribute to regular multidisciplinary learning and have opportunities to learn from reviews
- Midwives have clear mechanisms to escalate professional or workplace concerns
- Midwives can describe the impact of clinical supervision
- Midwives say that they are able to provide high quality inclusive care to all women, people and families
- Midwives have protected time to undertake core mandatory training in working hours including human factors training

Evaluated by
RCM member survey

achieving our ambition together



Resources

Culture

- [Once for Scotland](http://www.workforce.nhs.scot/) (www.workforce.nhs.scot/)
- [Pin Policies](http://www.staffgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/partnership/once-for-scotland-workforce-policies/) (www.staffgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/partnership/once-for-scotland-workforce-policies/)
- [Staff Governance](http://www.staffgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/) (www.staffgovernance.scot.nhs.uk/)
- West M(2021) [Compassionate leadership: Sustaining Wisdom, humanity and presence in health and social care](https://www.swirlingleafpress.co.uk/). Swirling leaf press.UK.
- [National trauma training programme | Turas | Learn](https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37896) (<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/37896>)
- [One out of four learning resource | Turas | Learn](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/one-out-of-four-learning-resource)
- [Perinatal and Infant Mental Health | Turas | Learn](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/perinatal-and-infant-mental-health) (www.turas.org.uk/learn/perinatal-and-infant-mental-health)
- [Re:Birth summary 2022](http://www.rcm.org.uk/rebirth-hub/rebirth-summary-2022/) (www.rcm.org.uk/rebirth-hub/rebirth-summary-2022/)
- RCM Scotland survey (www.rcm.org.uk/media/6081/scotland-survey-report-2022-digitalfinal.pdf)
- [Caring for you hub](http://www.rcm.org.uk/caring-for-you-hub-home/) (www.rcm.org.uk/caring-for-you-hub-home/)
- [Race matters](http://www.rcm.org.uk/supporting/race-matters/) (www.rcm.org.uk/supporting/race-matters/)
- [Solution series 4 - Making maternity services safer: Nurturing positive culture](http://www.rcm.org.uk/media/5649/solution_series_4_making_maternity_services_safer_nurturing_a_positive_culture_.pdf) (www.rcm.org.uk/media/5649/solution_series_4_making_maternity_services_safer_nurturing_a_positive_culture_.pdf)
- [Race equality framework for Scotland 2016 to 2030](http://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-2030/pages/14/) (www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-2030/pages/14/)
- [Race equality action plan: final report](http://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-action-plan-final-report/) (www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-action-plan-final-report/)
- [Muslim Women Network](http://www.mwnuk.co.uk/) (www.mwnuk.co.uk)
- [Mums Matter Report PRINT](http://www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Mums-Matter-Report-PRINT.pdf) (www.scotphn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Mums-Matter-Report-PRINT.pdf)

Leadership

- [Strengthening midwifery leadership](http://www.rcm.org.uk/publications/?query=strengthening+midwifery+&page=1) www.rcm.org.uk/publications/?query=strengthening+midwifery+&page=1
- [The Solution series 2 – Making maternity services safer: The role of leadership](http://www.rcm.org.uk/media/5415/the-solution-series-2-making-maternity-services-safer-the-role-of-leadership-v1-interactive.pdf) (www.rcm.org.uk/media/5415/the-solution-series-2-making-maternity-services-safer-the-role-of-leadership-v1-interactive.pdf)
- [Turas Leadership and Management programmes](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/18217) ([learn.nes.nhs.scot/18217](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/18217))
- [Turas Leadership programmes](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/Search/SearchResults?RelationRootNode=Leadership%20and%20Management%20Programmes&searchterm=leadership&page=1&searchStatusType=PublishedOnly) ([learn.nes.nhs.scot/Search/SearchResults?RelationRootNode=Leadership%20and%20Management%20Programmes&searchterm=leadership&page=1&searchStatusType=PublishedOnly](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/Search/SearchResults?RelationRootNode=Leadership%20and%20Management%20Programmes&searchterm=leadership&page=1&searchStatusType=PublishedOnly))
- [Turas Preceptorship](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/42348) ([learn.nes.nhs.scot/42348](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/42348))
- [Leading for the Future | Turas | Learn](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/946) ([www.turas.org.uk/learn/946/leadership-and-management-programmes/leading-for-the-future](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/946))
- [The courage of compassion: Supporting nurses and midwives to deliver high-quality care](http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/courage-compassion-supporting-nurses-midwives) (www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/courage-compassion-supporting-nurses-midwives)

Career framework

- [Career Framework](http://www.nmahpdevelopmentframework.nes.scot.nhs.uk/) (www.nmahpdevelopmentframework.nes.scot.nhs.uk/)
- [Nursing, midwifery and allied health clinical academic research careers in the UK](http://www.councilofdeans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Nursing-midwifery-and-allied-health-clinical-academic-research-careers-in-the-UK.pdf) (www.councilofdeans.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Nursing-midwifery-and-allied-health-clinical-academic-research-careers-in-the-UK.pdf)
- [RCM Career Framework](http://www.rcm.org.uk/promoting/learning-careers/career-framework/) (www.rcm.org.uk/promoting/learning-careers/career-framework/)
- [TURAS Identifying and supporting your continuing professional development \(CPD\) and career development](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/1828) ([learn.nes.nhs.scot/1828/identifying-and-supporting-your-continuing-professional-development-cpd-and-career-development](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/1828))
- [Women, Children, Young People and Families | Turas | Learn](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/33523) ([learn.nes.nhs.scot/33523/women-children-young-people-and-families](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/33523))

Safety

- [Seven features of safety in maternity units: a framework based on multisite ethnography and stakeholder consultation | BMJ Quality and Safety](https://www.bmj.com/content/30/6/444) (<https://www.bmj.com/content/30/6/444>)
- [20210308-eosc-readiness-tool-v012.pdf](https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/5420/solution_series_1_improving_maternity_learning_from_reviews_of_maternity_services_v1_interactive.pdf) ([ihub.scot](https://www.rcm.org.uk/media/5420/solution_series_1_improving_maternity_learning_from_reviews_of_maternity_services_v1_interactive.pdf))
- [Solution series 1 – improving maternity: Learning from reviews of maternity services](http://www.rcm.org.uk/media/5420/solution_series_1_improving_maternity_learning_from_reviews_of_maternity_services_v1_interactive.pdf) (www.rcm.org.uk/media/5420/solution_series_1_improving_maternity_learning_from_reviews_of_maternity_services_v1_interactive.pdf)
- [Safety in services](http://www.rcm.org.uk/promoting/professional-practice/safety-in-services/) (www.rcm.org.uk/promoting/professional-practice/safety-in-services/)
- [Safety in the workplace and practice](http://www.rcm.org.uk/promoting/professional-practice/safety-in-services/safety-in-the-workplace-and-practice/) (www.rcm.org.uk/promoting/professional-practice/safety-in-services/safety-in-the-workplace-and-practice/)
- [Essentials of safe care | Scottish Patient Safety Programme \(SPSP\) | ihub - Essentials of Safe Care](https://www.rcm.org.uk/improvement-programmes/scottish-patient-safety-programme-spsp/essentials-of-safe-care/) ([ihub.scot/improvement-programmes/scottish-patient-safety-programme-spsp/essentials-of-safe-care/](https://www.rcm.org.uk/improvement-programmes/scottish-patient-safety-programme-spsp/essentials-of-safe-care/))
- [SPSP Maternity and Children Quality Improvement Collaborative \(MCQIC\) | Healthcare Improvement Scotland - Maternity and Children Quality Improvement Collaborative \(MCQIC\)](https://www.rcm.org.uk/improvement-programmes/scottish-patient-safety-programme-spsp/spsp-programmes-of-work/maternity-and-children-quality-improvement-collaborative-mcqcic) (www.rcm.org.uk/improvement-programmes/scottish-patient-safety-programme-spsp/spsp-programmes-of-work/maternity-and-children-quality-improvement-collaborative-mcqcic)
- [Perinatal Adverse Events - Scottish Perinatal Network](http://www.perinatalnetwork.scot/perinatal/perinatal-adverse-events/#:~:text=The%20national%20Healthcare%20Improvement%20Scotland%20%28HIS%29%20Learning%20From,and%20nationally%20to%20improve%20the%20quality%20of%20services.) (www.perinatalnetwork.scot/perinatal/perinatal-adverse-events/#:~:text=The%20national%20Healthcare%20Improvement%20Scotland%20%28HIS%29%20Learning%20From,and%20nationally%20to%20improve%20the%20quality%20of%20services.)

- [A national approach to learning from adverse events](http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/learning_from_adverse_events.aspx) (www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/governance_and_assurance/learning_from_adverse_events.aspx)
- [Post supervision across the UK](http://www.rcm.org.uk/supporting/post-supervision-across-the-uk/) (www.rcm.org.uk/supporting/post-supervision-across-the-uk/)
- [CSM Unit 1.pdf](http://www.test1.nes.digital/media/3963029/CSM%20Unit%201.pdf) (www.test1.nes.digital/media/3963029/CSM%20Unit%201.pdf)
- [Clinical supervision | Turas | Learn](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/3580) ([www.turas.org.uk/learn/3580/clinical-supervision](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/3580))
- [The Scottish Clinical Supervision Model for midwives](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336272133) ([www.researchgate.net/publication/336272133_The_Scottish_Clinical_Supervision_Model_for_midwives](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336272133))
- [Human Factors Hub | Turas | Learn](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/21394) ([www.turas.org.uk/learn/21394/human-factors-hub](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/21394))
- [Patient Safety Training | Turas | Learn](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/990) ([www.turas.org.uk/learn/990/patient-safety-zone/patient-safety-training](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/990))
- [Patient Safety Zone | Turas | Learn](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/514) ([www.turas.org.uk/learn/514/patient-safety-zone](https://www.turas.org.uk/learn/514))
- [Human factors](http://www.rcm.org.uk/publications/?query=human+factors&page=1) (www.rcm.org.uk/publications/?query=human+factors&page=1)
- [The deteriorating postpartum woman](http://www.ilearn.org.uk) (www.ilearn.org.uk)

K2 Perinatal Training Programme

- [Logon \(k2ms.com\)](http://www.k2ms.com)
- [Neonatal Life support : www.seedlinguk.co.uk/hcp-confirmed/?redirect=/](http://www.seedlinguk.co.uk/hcp-confirmed/?redirect=/)
- [PROMPT: www.youtube.com/channel/UC8PZGugxqDKBUcpTrulAfw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8PZGugxqDKBUcpTrulAfw)





Royal College
of Midwives

Scotland five year plan
Published: August 2022

Follow us on:



@ScotlandRCM



www.facebook.com/MidwivesRCM



@midwives_rcm

RCM Scotland,
37 Frederick Street,
Edinburgh, EH2 1EP

0300 303 0444
info@rcm.org.uk
www.rcm.org.uk