

Ensuring a high standard of care

Harriet Craig is a clinical midwifery sister, who works in the delivery suite at the Antrim Area Hospital at Northern Health and Social Care Trust. With a revalidation date in April 2016, Harriet was one of the first midwives in the UK to revalidate.

I remember reading about revalidation in *Midwives* magazine, the Royal College of Midwives' quarterly publication, and thinking: this isn't a million miles from what we already do.

In fact, the new process didn't seem to be alien at all. It builds on what we've always done to meet the Prep requirements, and it occurred to me that the reflective discussion and confirmation elements are fairly similar to midwifery supervision. They're all about interacting with other professionals and getting an outside perspective on your practice. For these reasons, I don't think midwives will find revalidation daunting or unachievable when they actually go through the process.

I was helped with my own revalidation application by a series of revalidation workshops that my Trust set up to support nurses and midwives through the new process. I also found the resources on the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) website very useful, as they explained everything clearly. One of the most helpful resources, for me, was the article on myths and misconceptions (NMC, 2015a). There had initially been confusion about whether we had to store our revalidation evidence online, and I was hearing mixed messages. The article cleared up the uncertainty by explaining that storing information online is not a requirement of revalidation.

Reflecting on my practice was a stand-out part of the revalidation process for me. I linked my reflections to practice-related feedback from service users, which really helped me to see how much my job has an impact on people every day. When you're in the middle of a busy shift, it can be hard to recognise that you're doing well;

but the reflective aspect of revalidation helped me to appreciate that positive feedback is just as valuable as constructive criticism. That was a real confidence boost.

I particularly like the way reflections—and revalidation as a whole—link to the *Code* (NMC, 2015b). I think the *Code* is empowering for midwives, and a useful tool for guiding daily practice. When I was reflecting on my practice, I found it extremely helpful to think about the standards in the *Code* and the way I use them every day when I'm caring for women and babies. This focused my thoughts and helped ensure that my written accounts were meaningful.

I am responsible for organising delivery suite staff meetings, so I'm in the lucky position of being able to pass on my experience of revalidation to others and reassure them that they will easily be able to manage their own revalidation. As I was going through the process of learning about revalidation, I was cascading information to other staff members. I don't think there's a chance that any of my colleagues could not know about revalidation now!

One of the most important things to say to midwives who haven't yet gone through the revalidation process is: remember that it's straightforward. It's new, but that doesn't mean you should worry about it; if you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the process, ask your colleagues or a member of NMC staff. The website is very comprehensive, and should be able to answer all of your questions. If you engage with the resources that are out there, you won't have any problems.

I actually enjoyed revalidation. I can see that it will benefit the wider midwifery workforce in the long run by making sure we're all on the same page, meeting the same standards in the same way. We're all working in a pressurised, constantly changing environment, and anything that provides some consistency should be

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welcomed. If you love your job and want the best for the women and families you work with, you'll realise that you can't provide the best possible care unless you are looking after yourself as a professional, and revalidation helps all of us to do that.

I'm honoured to have been among the first midwives in the UK to go through revalidation. I think it is a significant change to the way we stay on the register and show that we are practising to the high standards that service users and colleagues expect of us—and, of course, that we expect of ourselves.

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This case study was provided to BJM by the NMC. For more information on revalidation, visit the dedicated NMC website at revalidation.nmc.org.uk

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2015a)

Common myths and misconceptions about the revalidation process. <http://tinyurl.com/zl9oqwr>

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2015b) *The Code: Professional standards of practice and behaviour for nurses and midwives*. NMC, London

Are you revalidating?

BJM wants to hear from midwives at all levels who are going through the revalidation process and are happy to share their experiences. To contribute or for further information, please email the editor at bjm@markallengroup.com

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