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RCM Career Framework

Maternity Support Worker Band 3

What is a Maternity Support Worker (Band 3) and what do they do?

The Maternity Support Worker (MSW) undertakes duties in a maternity setting, under the direction and supervision of a registered midwife, for which midwifery training and registration are not required. MSWs complement the care that midwives provide women and babies.

The title MSW is the most commonly used title to describe a support worker working in maternity but there are various titles used that describe the same role. In Scotland the most commonly used title used is Maternity Care Assistant.

Maternity Support Workers can be NHS Agenda for Change banded at 2, 3 or 4.

MSWs should be recruited and trained as workers specific to maternity care, not as general NHS healthcare assistants. This allows for greater job satisfaction and closer integration into the service.

The **MSW (Band 2)** can carry out a range of tasks that focus on housekeeping, administration and the personal care of women and babies. They will work in a range of maternity settings but will not deliver care to women and babies in their homes in the absence of a midwife.

The **MSW (Band 4)** MSW in addition to the duties that a MSW (Band 3) could undertake will have additional responsibilities that require higher communication and organisational skills. Examples include leading on a public health initiative e.g. smoking cessation or having responsibility for the training and development of other MSWs.

Maternity Support Worker (Band 3)

The **MSW (Band 3)** will undertake a range of delegated clinical and clerical duties, including patient record keeping and data protection responsibilities. These may be in addition to the tasks undertaken in a Band 2 MSW role. These duties may include the recording of vital signs of the woman and those of the normal neonate, obtaining blood and urine samples, preparing equipment, supporting midwives in the conduct of a normal birth, assist in emergency situations with the ability to instigate emergency procedures and work in obstetric theatre. The latter could include undertaking a scrub role. The MSW (Band 3) may also deliver care to women and babies in their own homes. Clinical supervision of less experienced staff and training of new staff is incorporated into the band 3 role.

The MSW (Band 3) can support a midwife at a home birth. As well as delegated clinical duties the MSW (Band 3) can educate parents one-to-one or in groups in the care their baby under the direction of a midwife.

The NHS Job Profile that this role will be job-matched to is Nursing: Clinical Support Worker Higher Level (Band 3).

Skills and personal characteristics needed

As a MSW, you'll need to be:

- caring and patient
- able to work with people from all walks of life
- accepting of other peoples lifestyles

- flexible and adaptable to deal with unpredictable situations
- able to follow instructions and procedures
- able to work under pressure
- able to deal with other people's emotions
- able to work independently using own initiative
- able to identify risk and concern and escalation procedure
- resilient

How do I become a Maternity Support Worker?

There are no set entry requirements. Employers expect a good standard of numeracy and literacy and may ask for GCSEs or equivalent. They may ask for a qualification in health and social care, nursery nursing or childcare such as CACHE, NNEB, BTEC or NVQ or be prepared to undertake a qualification.

Employers may ask for experience of working with children and families or in a care setting. Experience in customer care may also be required. This can be either or paid or voluntary work.

A Level 3 Senior Healthcare Support Worker (maternity pathway) apprenticeship may be offered. This will take 18-24 months to complete.

On appointment MSWs will receive an induction programme. In England this will be the Care Certificate or an equivalent induction programme that meet the Care Certificate standards. It is mandatory to complete the Care Certificate in full when undertaking an apprenticeship. The Care Certificate is an agreed set of standards that sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours expected of specific job roles in the health and social care sectors. It's made up of the 15 minimum standards:

1. Understand your role
2. Your personal development
3. Duty of care
4. Equality and diversity
5. Work in a person centred way
6. Communication
7. Privacy and dignity
8. Fluids and nutrition
9. Awareness of mental health, dementia and learning disabilities
10. Safeguarding adults
11. Safeguarding children
12. Basic life support
13. Health and safety
14. Handling information
15. Infection prevention and control

Completion is through a combination of teaching and workplace assessment.



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If I want to progress my career what other opportunities are there for me?

As a MSW (Band 3) you will develop many transferable skills that will enable you to advance your career as a MSW or in other health or social care roles. This may include training to be a midwife.

You enter the midwifery profession directly by undertaking a degree course leading to a midwifery qualification. The European Union requires that the degree is no less than three years (equivalent to 156 weeks full time)

The minimum requirement for a midwifery degree courses is two A levels or equivalent but each university will have its own specific criteria, so it is best to check with the individual institution.