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## RCM Career framework

### Maternity Support Worker Band 4

#### What is a Maternity Support Worker (Band 4) 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 3)** will undertake a range of delegated clinical duties. 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 and work in obstetric theatre. The latter could include undertaking a scrub role.

#### Maternity Support Worker (Band 4)

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 in difficult situations and organisational skills while working independently with supervision available. Examples include leading on a public health initiative e.g. smoking cessation or having responsibility for the training and development of other MSWs.

The MSW (Band 4) will be able to communicate complex or sensitive information to women and their families.

#### Education, training and development

A MSW (Band 4) requires knowledge of maternity care procedures and practices. This knowledge will normally be developed whilst in a MSW Band 3 role. The Band 4 MSW would have a Level 3 qualification plus additional training to diploma level or equivalent.

#### 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 priorities, organise and adjust work load in relation to client care
- 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
- Foundation Degree

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. 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 4) 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 EU (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.