

The Nursing and Midwifery Council

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Online Journalist NMC

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) came into operation on 1 April 2002. Its core function is to establish and improve standards of nursing, midwifery and health visiting care in order to serve and protect the public. To this end, it maintains a register of qualified nurses, midwives and health visitors and sets standards for their education, practice and conduct.

The NMC is the product of a major shake-up of nursing and midwifery regulation initiated by the government, which saw the abolition of the UKCC and the four National Boards. Essentially, the NMC has taken over the functions of the UKCC, together with some of those formerly handled by the National Boards. These include the quality assurance of nursing and midwifery education in England, and setting standards for midwives' Local Supervising Authorities (LSAs) throughout the UK.

Information resources

The NMC provides information about its key functions to registrants, employers, education bodies and the general public.

NMC publications include advice booklets for registrants on professional practice issues, a *Code of professional conduct*, details of requirements for pre-registration courses, and research reports. There is also a quarterly newsletter, **NMC News**, which is circulated to all of the 650,000 people on the register. All publications are provided free of charge.

As part of its public protection role, the NMC provides employers with monthly **Circulars** that give details of any people removed from the register following hearings of the Professional Conduct and Health committees. They also give details of cautions, suspensions and restorations, and are kept in circulation for three months.

Information about professional conduct decisions is also provided to the public via **Press Statements**, which normally go to local newspapers and radio stations. Press statements are also used to communicate NMC policy decisions and news of forthcoming events.

The NMC stages a range of **Events** around the country to publicise its work. Current plans include a series of one-day public conferences to explain the new regulatory system, and professional advice seminars aimed at registrants.

Another important source of information for registrants is the **Professional Advice Service**, which deals with telephone and e-mail queries from registrants needing advice about professional issues.

The **Confirmations** service is a resource for employers of nurses and midwives. By phoning the 24-hour Confirmations hotline, they can check whether employees are on the NMC register, and so eligible to practise.

The NMC carries out frequent **Consultations** on policy issues. It seeks the views of the public and practitioners via the website (see below) and *NMC News*, and also circulates consultation documents to key stakeholder organisations.

Finally, there is a small **Library** of nursing and midwifery publications. This is for the use of NMC officers and is not open to the public.

The website

The NMC website www.nmc-uk.org is playing an increasingly central role in NMC business. It carries downloadable copies of all current NMC publications, Circulars and Press statements, as well as details of current Consultations and forthcoming events.

The site has a growing number of interactive features. There are online forms for ordering publications and booking events, and users can subscribe to a monthly newsletter giving details of site updates. There are also feedback forms, polls and quizzes. The newest feature is an **online Confirmations service**, which offers an alternative to telephone and e-mail enquiries. This service is already growing at a rapid rate, and will be followed by further online services related to the NMC register, including facilities for nurses and midwives to renew their registrations and for overseas applicants to progress their applications.

ENB resources

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the National Boards were replaced by successor bodies with basically similar functions. However, there is no such replacement for the English National Board (ENB), whose functions have been divided between the NMC, Department of Health and higher education institutions (HEIs). This raises the question of what happens to the information resources formerly provided by the ENB.

The NMC has agreed to take over the remaining stock of ENB publications, which are now available via an external mailing house, McMillan-Scott plc. Their contact details are:

NMC Bookshop
McMillan-Scott plc
6 Bourne Enterprise Centre
Wrotham Road
Borough Green
Kent
TN15 8DG
Tel: 01732 886422
Fax: 01732 886686

e-mail: nmc@mcmslondon.co.uk

www.nurses-books.co.uk

The McMillan-Scott website has a list of all the ENB publications available and an online ordering facility. Please note that McMillan-Scott supply ENB publications only; they do not stock any NMC publications.

A small number of ENB publications are also available from the NMC website as downloadable PDFs. These include a complete set of *Research Highlights*, published by the ENB between 1993 and 2002.

A popular feature of the old ENB website was a **database of abstracts** from nursing and midwifery journals. The NMC has received several enquiries about this, but it has in fact been taken over by the Royal College of Nursing (RCN). The database is available at www.rcn.org.uk but as yet will not include any updates.

Any queries about the information resources of the NMC should be directed to the Communications department, e-mail Communications@nmc-uk.org.