

# Induction and Development Pathway for Maternity Support Workers employed by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland



*This document utilises the terms ‘woman’, or ‘women’ however these terms will also apply to people who do not identify as women but are pregnant or have given birth.*

## **Introduction**

This Induction and Development Pathway is for all Maternity Support Workers employed in Health and Social Care (HSC) Trusts across Northern Ireland. Maternity Support Workers are an integral part of maternity services and are key to providing support to midwives in the delivery of safe and effective woman-centred care.

The role of Maternity Support Worker (MSW) is to assist in caring for women and their families throughout their maternity journey, working under the direction and supervision of a registered midwife and within agreed guidelines and protocols.

It is therefore crucial that employers develop the competence (knowledge, skills and behaviours) of Maternity Support Workers to enable them to provide safe, effective, compassionate and woman-centred care.

The Department of Health’s Maternity Support Worker Induction and Development Pathway is designed to equip Maternity Support Workers in HSC Trusts with the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to fulfil their role. Those Maternity Support Workers already employed in HSC Trusts should be supported by their employer to attain the additional education units in the regional Maternity Support Worker education programme relevant to their role, within an agreed timeframe.

## **Induction and Development Pathway for Maternity Support Workers**

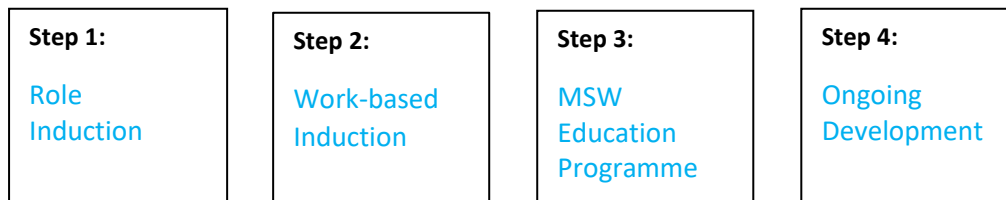
The Induction and Development Pathway is underpinned by the Standards for Maternity Support Workers (DoH, 2023)<sup>1</sup>. The Pathway comprises four steps which HSC Trusts can build on to support and develop Maternity Support Workers in their role. The following steps in the Pathway (Figure1.) highlight the concept of ongoing learning and development for Maternity Support Workers, as they progress through their career.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health (2023), Standards for Maternity Support Workers employed by HSC Trusts in Northern Ireland. (DoH, 2023)

**Figure 1**

## **Induction and Development Pathway for Maternity Support Workers**



### **Steps in the Induction and Development Pathway**

The first two steps in the Induction and Development Pathway are supported by education programmes which will be standardised across HSC Trusts. It is intended that these steps will contribute to the portfolio of evidence required for the attainment of the Vocational Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support (Maternity Support Workers) Qualification.

The MSW education programme, the third step in the Pathway, will be accredited and awarded in line with the regionally agreed Vocational Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support (Maternity Support Workers) Qualification.

Ongoing Development, the fourth step, is aided through the implementation of the annual review and personal development planning processes within HSC Trusts. This review process facilitates the Maternity Support Worker to meet with their line manager and plan their development following identification of their learning needs.

Each one of the four steps in the Induction and Development Pathway is described as follows:

#### **Step 1: Role Induction**

It is anticipated that individuals will complete the core elements of the regional Role Induction programme within the first four weeks of commencing work in the clinical environment/workplace. Any change to this should be by exception and should be signed off by the Head of Midwifery.

The core components of the Role Induction programme are mapped against the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework<sup>2</sup> (see Table 1).

---

<sup>2</sup> Department of Health, London (DH) (2004) NHS/KSF and the Development Review Process. London: DoH.

Table 1 Core Content of Role Induction Programme
Principles of woman-centered care.
Care of the woman and her family with for example; eating, drinking, washing, toileting, pressure area care and communication under the guidance of the registered midwife
Standards for Maternity Support Workers (DoH, 2023) <sup>1</sup>
Role of the MSW within the maternity care team
Application of HSC Values
Adhere to the principles within the Accountability and Delegation Framework (NIPEC, 2019) <sup>3</sup>
Corporate Mandatory Training as per HSC Trust requirements
NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework awareness.

## Step 2: Work-based Induction

The Work-based Induction will continue over a six-month period following the trainee Maternity Support Worker's commencement in the ward/department or community team and will be supported through a training programme. The Work-based programme should be completed in parallel with the probationary period<sup>4</sup>.

The core components of the Work-based Induction programme are mapped against the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (see Table 2) and contribute towards fulfilment of the Maternity Support Worker Education Programme.

The line manager should ensure that the trainee Maternity Support Worker is supported to complete this programme.

<sup>3</sup> Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC) (2019) Deciding to delegate: a decision support framework for nursing and midwifery. Belfast: NIPEC.

<sup>4</sup> Individuals who fail to meet the requirements of this induction will be managed through the organisation's existing probationary process

**Table 2.**

<b>Table 2 Core Content of Role Work-based Induction Programme</b>
Orientation to the clinical environment/workplace.
Care of the woman and her family with for example; eating, drinking, washing, toileting, pressure area care and communication under the guidance of the registered midwife
Standards for Maternity Support Workers (DoH, 2023) <sup>1</sup>
Awareness and understanding of reporting structures.
Application of learning into practice which will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Documentation of care in line with the NI Record Keeping Guidelines (NIPEC, 2016) and the HSC IT systems</li><li>• Evidence based maternity care such as: providing information, guidance, reassurance, assistance and support to women and their families under the guidance of the registered midwife</li></ul>
Undertake role specific mandatory training to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Record Keeping</li><li>• Safeguarding Children (Level 2)</li><li>• Safeguarding Adults</li><li>• Adult Basic Life Support</li><li>• Infant Feeding Education programme</li><li>• PRactical Obstetric Multi-Professional Training (PROMPT)</li><li>• Haemoviligance</li></ul>

### **Step 3: Maternity Support Worker Education Programme**

In parallel with the Work-based Induction programme, the trainee Maternity Support Worker will be supported by their line manager and employer to complete the Maternity Support Worker education programme (see Table 3). The line manager is responsible for partnering the Maternity Support Worker with a registered midwife<sup>5</sup> who will act as a facilitator throughout the programme.

It is required that the Vocational Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support (Maternity Support Worker) or equivalent qualification must be held within 2

---

<sup>5</sup> One or more midwives may act a facilitator to support and develop the trainee MSW's competence and confidence throughout the MSW education programme.

years of taking up post. It may be the case in some exceptional circumstances that this requirement is not met. All such cases will be considered by the line manager and the Head of Midwifery and managed appropriately through HSC Trust processes.

**Table 3.**

Table 3 Maternity Support Worker Education Programme
Completion of agreed units in the regionally agreed Vocational Level 3 Diploma in Healthcare Support (Maternity Support Workers) Qualification. * (see Appendix 1).

\* "Level 3 Diploma" has been regionally agreed as the minimum qualification standard

## Step 4: Ongoing Development

It is important that Maternity Support Workers understand the importance of continuing to learn and develop within their role and that they are supported by their employer and line manager to do so. The NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework Development review process facilitates this process. The Maternity Support Worker with their line manager will identify and develop a plan to meet their learning and development needs in conjunction with the requirements of the DoH Standards for Maternity Support Workers (DoH, 2023)<sup>1</sup> and their job description.

Maternity Support Workers may also consider the option to progress to becoming a registered midwife.

## Appendix 1.

	<b>RQF Units or equivalent vocational units</b>
1.	Engage in personal development in health, social care or children's and young people's settings
2.	Provide advice and information to enable parents to promote the health and well-being of their newborn babies
3.	Obtain venous blood samples (Adult)
4.	Communicate with individuals about promoting their health and wellbeing while working as a Health Trainer
5.	The role of the health and social care worker
6.	Promote good practice in handling information in health and social care settings
7.	Prepare individuals for healthcare activities
8.	Monitor and maintain the environment and resources during and after clinical/therapeutic activities
9.	Care for a newborn baby when the mother is unable to do so
10.	Support individuals undergoing healthcare activities
11.	Support individuals during a period of change
12.	Care for newborn baby
13.	Undertake physiological measurements for adult and infant
14.	Anatomy and physiology for Maternity Support Workers
15.	Obtain and test capillary blood samples for adult and infant
16.	Understand how to Safeguard the Wellbeing of Children and Young People
17.	Promote person-centred approaches in health and social care