

From the Chief Executive and Registrar

Dr Dai Lloyd AM  
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21 February 2020

Dear Dr Lloyd

Thank you for your letter of 10 February 2020 regarding the inquiry into sepsis that is currently being undertaken by the Health, Social Care and Sports Committee of the National Assembly for Wales.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council is the independent regulator for nurses and midwives in the UK and nursing associates in England. We hold a register of all the 700,000-plus nurses, midwives and nursing associates. Better and safer care for people is at the heart of what we do, supporting the healthcare professionals on our register to deliver the highest standards of care. We make sure nurses, midwives and nursing associates have the skills they need to care for people safely, with integrity, expertise, respect and compassion, from the moment they step into their first job and throughout their careers.

Our key function in relation to the area being looked at by this inquiry is in ensuring that all nurses and midwives are educated and trained to prevent, recognise, support and participate in the management of people's care when sepsis is suspected or confirmed, and in ensuring that, in line with their scope of practice, that they continue to remain up to date with their knowledge and competence.

We are unable to comment on matters such as sepsis incidence, how sepsis is presenting itself, and identified and managed in care settings, or what screening tools are used, as this does not fall within our regulatory remit. However, we would expect all nurses and midwives to always practise in line with the best available evidence.

In particular, I would like to refer you to our new standards of proficiency for midwives and nurses, and have drawn out some of the relevant proficiencies and skills for ease.

### **Future midwife**

We published new [Standards of proficiency for midwives](#) in November 2019. These set out the knowledge and skills that midwives are required to demonstrate at the point of entry to the register, and throughout their careers.

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We are the professional regulatory body for nurses and midwives in the UK. Our role is to protect patients and the public through efficient and effective regulation.

Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362)

In particular, all midwives must be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to share information on public health, health promotion and health protection with women, enabling them to make evidence-informed decisions, and providing support for access to resources and services (Domain 3, 3.3)
- demonstrate effective health protection through understanding, and applying the principles of infection prevention and control, communicable disease surveillance, and antimicrobial resistance and stewardship (Domain 3, 3.10)
- use evidence-based, best practice approaches for the first line management of complications and additional care needs of the woman, foetus and/or new-born infant; including support, referral, interdisciplinary and multiagency team working, escalation and follow-up, as needed (Domain 4, 4.8)
- respond to signs of infection and sepsis (Domain 6, 6.71.4)
- use skills of infection prevention and control, following local and national policies and protocols (Domain 6, 6.28)
- engage women, partners, and families in understanding and applying principles of infection control and antimicrobial stewardship (Domain 6, 6.29)
- provide effective and timely communication with women who experience complications and require additional care needs, which could be as a result of sepsis (Domain 6, 6.2.7)
- escalate concerns in situations related to the health and wellbeing (including mental health and wellbeing) of the woman or new born infant (Domain 6, 6.7).

## **Future Nurse**

We published new standards of proficiency for registered nurses in May 2018. These standards came into effect in January 2019, and set out the knowledge, skills and attributes that registered nurses must demonstrate when caring for people of all ages, and across all care settings. They reflect what the public can expect nurses to know, and be able to do in order to deliver safe, compassionate and effective nursing care.

In particular, all nurses must be able to:

- communicate effectively using a range of skills and strategies with colleagues and people at all stages of life, and with a range of mental, physical, cognitive and behavioural health challenges (Platform 1, 1.11)
- demonstrate the knowledge and ability to respond proactively and promptly to signs of deterioration or distress in mental, physical, cognitive and behavioural health, and use this knowledge to make sound, clinical decisions (Platform 4, 4.11)
- identify and initiate appropriate interventions to support people who are suffering from anxiety, confusion, discomfort or pain (Platform 4, 4.8)
- identify and respond to signs of deterioration and sepsis (Annex B, 2.13)
- use evidence-based, best practice approaches for meeting needs for care and support with the prevention and management of infection (Annex B, 9).

In addition, all NMC registrants must abide by the requirements of The Code, our professional standards of practice and behaviour.

Under the Code, all nurses and midwives must be aware of, and reduce as far as possible, any potential for harm and includes:

- make sure that people's physical, social and psychological needs are assessed and responded to at all times (section 3)
- taking measures to reduce, as far as possible, the potential for harm, and the effects of harm if it takes place (section 19.1)
- keep to, and promote, recommended practice in relation to controlling and preventing infection (section 19.3), and take all reasonable personal precautions necessary to avoid potential health risks (section 19.4)
- raise, and if necessary, escalate any concerns they might have about patient health or safety, or the level of care people are receiving, including risk of, or actual infection (section 16.1).

Ensuring that these proficiencies and requirements are embedded in the practice of all nurses and midwives can contribute to the prevention of sepsis, and in early recognition, support and care for people with sepsis in all health and care settings.

We hope you find these comments to be a useful contribution on behalf of the NMC to the work of your inquiry. I look forward to reading the outcomes of your inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Andrea Sutcliffe CBE  
Chief Executive and Registrar