

CAF/23/06 - Increasing retention in midwifery: exploring factors that influence the decision to leave clinical practice

It has been known for at least the last two decades that there is a shortage of midwives working clinically. However, reports relating to staffing shortages are increasing in number and increasingly predict a potential impact on safety for mothers and babies. Recently, a number of safety investigations have found that inadequate staffing has had an impact on safety, resulting in poor outcomes for mothers and babies.

These reports often recommend the need for funding to train more midwives. However, new graduates will not replace the high number of qualified and experienced midwives leaving clinical practice. Therefore, additional measures are needed to keep midwives in practice. However, little is known about how to support midwives to stay in practice. This research will explore factors that influence whether midwives leave. A strategy will then be developed with midwives, clinical leads and policy makers, to encourage midwives to stay in clinical practice.

The study is being developed along with different (stakeholder) groups, including a Public and Patient Involvement (PPI) service user group, a midwifery staff group, and a group of professionals and policy makers. They will help make decisions throughout the research and contribute to the development of the retention strategy.