

# Consultant Midwives Survey

## 10 Key Findings

In 2016, the first comprehensive survey of consultant midwives throughout the four countries of the United Kingdom and the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man was carried out by the Royal College of Midwives Consultant Midwife Network and supported by RCM (Wilson et al. 2018). The survey aimed to identify overall numbers of consultant midwives, and examine demographic

and its role speciality. This first comprehensive evaluation of the role across the UK gave a robust data set which has set a benchmark for changes to be mapped against. The survey was repeated and modified in 2018; changes included evaluating the role and impact on midwifery leadership in addition to demographic information; giving a vibrant and dynamic overview of the position over time.\*



### Aims of the Survey

1. Map changes to the numbers of consultant midwives in post and demographics in all four UK countries and Channel Islands and Isle of Man
2. Evaluate succession planning for the role of consultant midwife
3. Evaluate participation in four domains of the role of consultant midwife
4. Evaluate impact on maternity services

01. **93** Consultant midwives working for the NHS throughout United Kingdom, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.



02. **68** Number of trusts out of 165 that employ consultant midwives.



41%

03. **75** The largest number of consultant midwives (in England), and the % working fulltime.



87%

04. **Net increase +4** of consultant midwives across the entire United Kingdom and Channel Islands over the two year period between surveys.



This showed a variation in the findings from the previous survey as an additional five consultant midwives were found to be in post at the time of the 2016 study making a total count at that time to be 89. This increase in the count was due to respondents not participating in the 2016 survey despite being in post but answering the survey in 2018 as well as local intelligence identifying consultant midwives in the post during both surveys who did not respond to either survey.

### 05. MAPPING

Number identified in studies in 2016 and 2018

**TOTAL**  
2016 **89** 2018 **93**

2016 **02** 2018 **02**  
**NORTHERN IRELAND**

2016 **06** 2018 **06**  
**SCOTLAND**

2016 **74** 2018 **75**  
**ENGLAND**

2016 **06** 2018 **09**  
**WALES**

2016 **01** 2018 **01**  
**CHANNEL ISLANDS AND ISLE OF MAN**

Wales showed the largest increase in consultant midwife numbers with the addition of three posts. Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands all maintained the number of consultant midwives in post, with no posts gained or lost. England showed the most movement in consultant midwife posts with a net increase of one consultant midwife overall.



73%

### Single post

Single **consultant midwife** employed in their organisations.

England and Wales were the only two countries to report multiple **consultant midwives** employed within one organisation.

27%

### Multiple posts

Two or more **consultant midwives** employed in their organisations.

## 06. ROLE ISOLATION

08.

5%

**Succession planning** in place in trusts or in healthboard.



There is only one identified academic consultant level programme for trainee provided by the South Central Strategic Clinical Network Wessex in England.

## 09. MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES



### Management

**1 in 5 consultant midwives** reported that **20%** of their time was dedicated to managerial responsibilities.

### Management duties

**10%** reported that management duties required more than **20%** of their time.

**14%** reported responsibility for specific individuals, small teams, birth centres or participating in the management on call rota out of hours.

## 07. DEMOGRAPHICS

**97%** reported to be **women**.



**52%** were reported to be female **aged over 50** (a reduction from **64%** in **2016** suggesting that many have retired)

24%

2016

Percentage of **consultants** with more than **10 years** of experience.

16%

2018

39%

2016

Percentage of **consultants** with **1 to 5 years** of experience.

47%

2018

## 10. HIGHER EDUCATION



77%

reported a **contribution to Higher Educational Institute** midwifery programmes with some further input into medical education, paramedic science and nursing programmes

4%

reported **formal contractual arrangements** with universities contributing to salary, most consultant midwives teaching in universities described a more ad hoc arrangement at local level.