THE SOLUTION
SERIES: 4

MAKING
MATERNITY
SERVICES
SAFER:
NURTURING
A POSITIVE
CULTURE

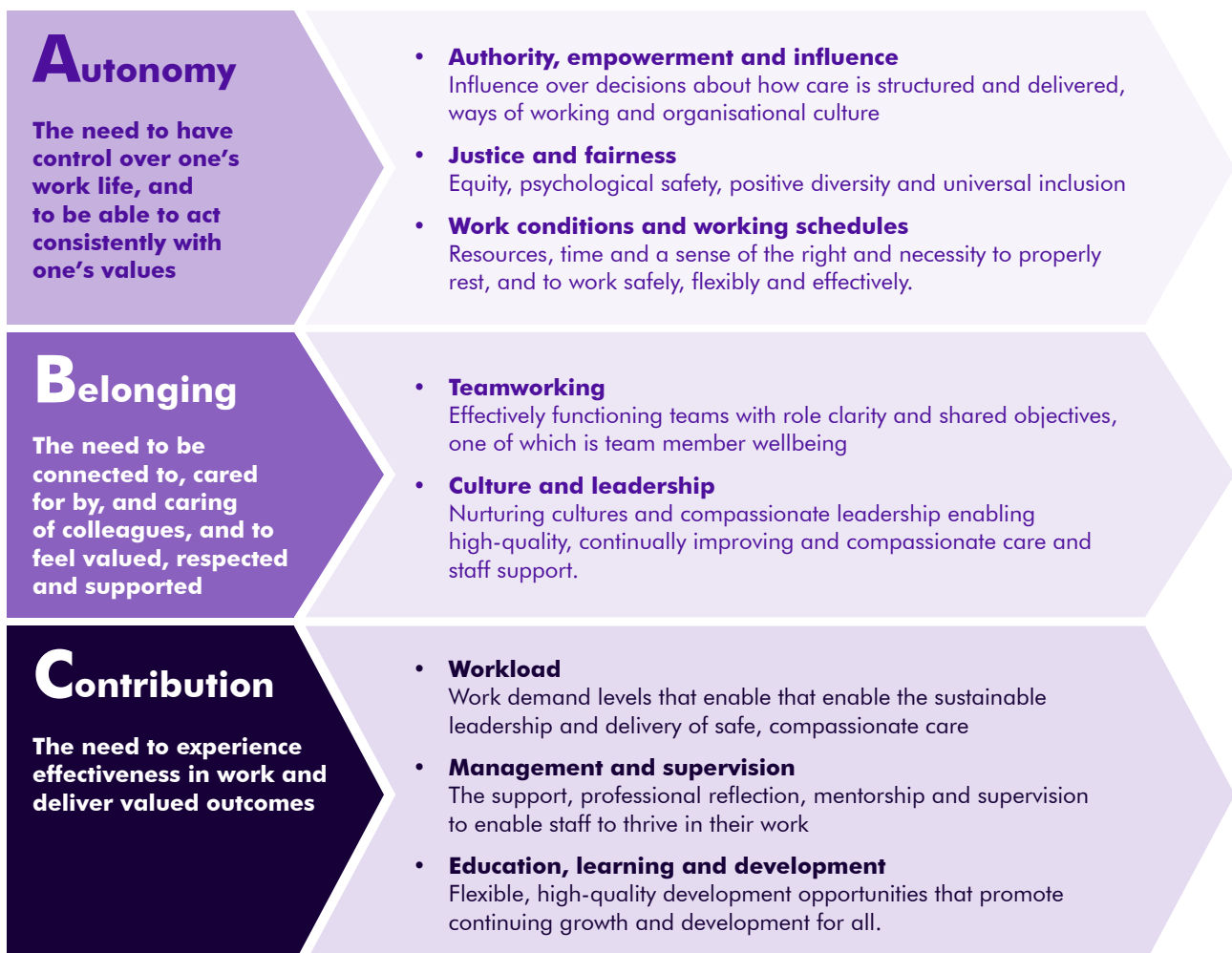# The role of a positive culture

Organisational culture has been identified as a key factor in recent investigations and reports on maternity safety. There is a growing body of evidence clearly linking culture with safety.

Culture can be described as 'the way we do things around here'. Culture in health services is shaped by a number of factors:

• The expressed values of an organisation

• The early experience of joiners to the organisation

• The behaviours of leaders (adapted from King's Fund, current website)

The Kings Fund have identified that staff have three core needs which must be addressed for them to thrive and flourish, which will in turn improve patients' care and experience. (Figure 1)

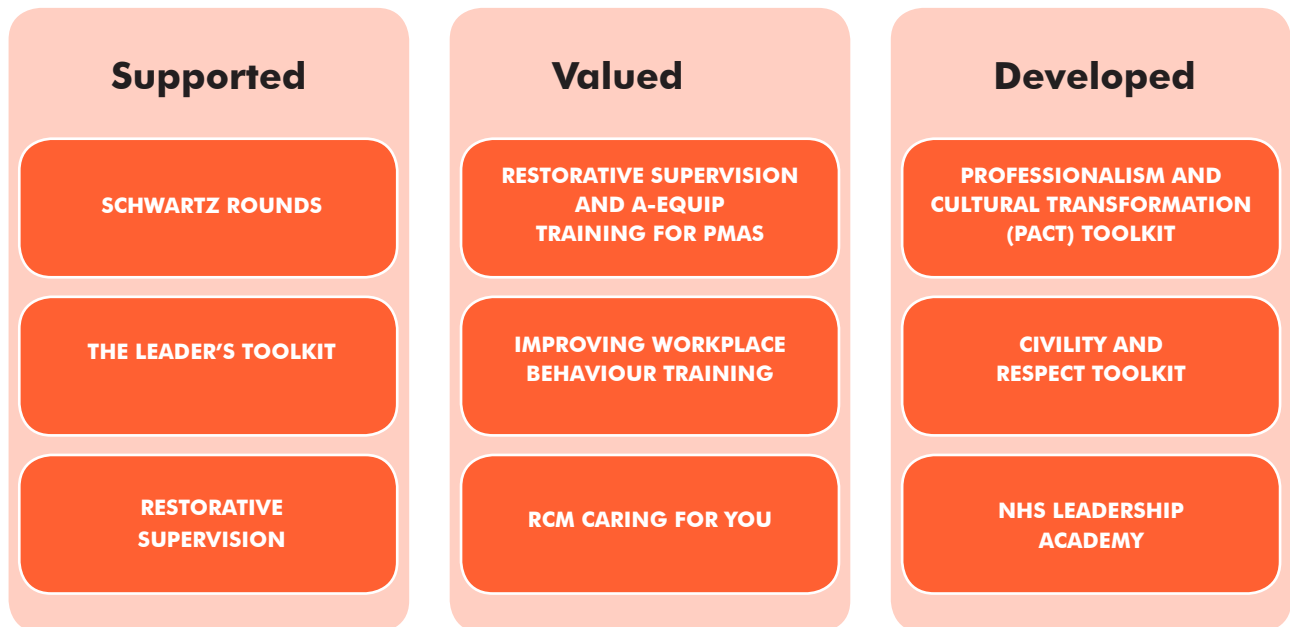**Figure 1:** The ABC framework of nurses' and midwives' core work needs

Autonomy

The need to have control over one's work life, and to be able to act consistently with one's values

• **Authority, empowerment and influence**
Influence over decisions about how care is structured and delivered, ways of working and organisational culture

• **Justice and fairness**
Equity, psychological safety, positive diversity and universal inclusion

• **Work conditions and working schedules**
Resources, time and a sense of the right and necessity to properly rest, and to work safely, flexibly and effectively.

Belonging

The need to be connected to, cared for by, and caring of colleagues, and to feel valued, respected and supported

• **Teamworking**
Effectively functioning teams with role clarity and shared objectives, one of which is team member wellbeing

• **Culture and leadership**
Nurturing cultures and compassionate leadership enabling high-quality, continually improving and compassionate care and staff support.

Contribution

The need to experience effectiveness in work and deliver valued outcomes

• **Workload**
Work demand levels that enable that enable the sustainable leadership and delivery of safe, compassionate care

• **Management and supervision**
The support, professional reflection, mentorship and supervision to enable staff to thrive in their work

• **Education, learning and development**
Flexible, high-quality development opportunities that promote continuing growth and development for all.

The courage of compassion The King's Fund (kingsfund.org.uk)

How do we improve our culture?

In order to provide compassionate, safe, effective person-centred care in this increasingly complex environment and maintain resilience, staff need to care for each other as well as have self-care. There is growing evidence on how staff who feel **supported, valued and developed** can deliver better quality care with lower mortality rates, morbidity, and improved patient experience (Simpson et al. 2019).

Below are some examples of practical tools and exercises you can use in your organisation to ensure those core needs are met.

Practical tools to improve culture

Supported	Valued	Developed
SCHWARTZ ROUNDS	RESTORATIVE SUPERVISION AND A-EQUIP TRAINING FOR PMAS	PROFESSIONALISM AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION (PACT) TOOLKIT
THE LEADER'S TOOLKIT	IMPROVING WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR TRAINING	CIVILITY AND RESPECT TOOLKIT
RESTORATIVE SUPERVISION	RCM CARING FOR YOU	NHS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

You can find additional information related to the above tools on how to improve culture in practice via the **NHS Employers professionalism and cultural transformation (PACT) toolkit**

How do we measure our culture?

The first step in improving culture has to be a deep understanding and assessment of the current organisational culture. This will help to determine the best course of action and tools needed – one that is tailored to the local context, including staff and organisational processes.

The 20xx publication **'Results of the RCM Health, Safety and Wellbeing Survey of Midwives, Maternity Support Workers and Student Midwives'** describes the findings of our survey of RCM members about their health, safety and wellbeing at work.

The latest NHS healthcare staff surveys, can provide essential information to employers and leaders about staff experience across the NHS in the United Kingdom:

NHS England | Staff Survey 2020

NHS Scotland | Staff Survey 2020

NHS Northern Ireland | Staff Survey 2019

NHS Wales | Staff Survey 2020

Key improvements and deteriorations drawn from those surveys are highlighted below

Key improvements and deteriorations highlighted in the latest staff surveys

Key improvements
• Employer action on health and wellbeing
• Staff views on feeling equipped to do a job properly
• Opportunities for flexible working
• Opinions on recommending the NHS as a place to work
• Staff ability to provide good quality care
• This is an overview of the results and I am thinking this could be summarised with an? Infographic.

Key deteriorations
• Staff from black and minority ethnic backgrounds continue to have more a negative experience of working in the NHS
• Lower confidence in organisations providing equal opportunities
• Rise in work-related stress
• A third of staff are considering leaving their jobs
• One in five are thinking of leaving the health service entirely
• Despite an increase in the number of staff agreeing that their organisation has enough staff for them to do their job properly – this represents less than two in five.

There is no identified 'gold standard' way of measuring culture across the NHS (Simpson et al.2019) but there are many tools which can be useful to assess your organisational culture. We have listed the top five most utilised tools below:

Organisational Culture self-assessment tools

NAME	GLOBAL THEME	LINK TO RESOURCES
Annual staff survey	Measures organisational culture	**www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/**
Friends and family test	Measures satisfaction	**www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/about-the-nhs/ friends-and-family-test-fft/**
Manchester patient safety questionnaire	Measures patient safety culture	**www.ajustnhs.com/wp-content/ uploads/2012/10/Manchester-Patient-Safety-Framework.pdf**
Culture and leadership programme	Clinical governance strategy	**www.kingsfund.org.uk/sites/default/files/ media/Suzie_Bailey%20pres.pdf**
The safety attitudes questionnaire	Patient safety culture	**https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral. com/articles/10.1186/1472-6963-6-44**

(Simpson et al. 2019)

It may take several years before a profound culture change takes place but starting with an assessment and ensuring the findings are shared with the workforce is a good starting point. Focussing on specific aspects such as leadership, competence, procedures, or teamwork can help to inform the process in a step-by-step approach.

Additional resources

Promoting positive cultures – creating a strong team:
www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwia-46S50I3xAhVB8xQKHbsCAc0QFjABegQIAhAE&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.rcm.org.uk%2Fme-dia%2F4232%2Fpositive-cultures-workshop.pptx&usg=AOvVaw3MIJ3DdwkyP0VY1N0Uk1rI

RCOG workplace behaviour toolkit:
www.rcog.org.uk/en/careers-training/workplace-workforce-issues/workplace-behaviour/toolkit/

Tackling undermining and bullying:
https://resolution.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/BullyingA4-final-Dec-2019-002.pdf

Coast E., Jones E., Portela A., Lattof S.R. (2014). Maternity Care Services and Culture: A Systematic Global Mapping of Interventions:
doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0108130

NHS Employers Profesionalism and cultural transformation pact toolkit:
www.nhsemployers.org/publications/professionalism-and-cultural-transformation-pact-toolkit

NHS England cultural leadership programme:
www.england.nhs.uk/culture/culture-leadership-programme/discovery-phase/

NICE recommendations, monitoring and evaluating staffing requirements:
www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng4/chapter/1-Recommendations#monitoring-and-evaluating-midwifery-staffing-requirements

Health and Safety Executive Human factor topics:
www.hse.gov.uk/humanfactors/topics/culture.htm

Health and Safety Executive Human factors – organisational change:
www.hse.gov.uk/humanfactors/topics/orgchange.htm

The Kings Fund Transformational change in health and care: reports from the field:
www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/transformational-change-health-care

The Kings Fund: Improving NHS culture:
www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/culture

The Kings Fund: The courage of compassion: supporting nurses and midwives to deliver high quality care:
www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/courage-compassion-supporting-nurses-midwives

Mannion R. and Davies H (2018). Understanding organisational culture for healthcare quality improvement BMJ 2018; 363 doi:
https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.k4907

Royal College of Midwives (2021). The solution series:1. Improving Maternity: Learning from reviews of maternity services:
www.rcm.org.uk/media/4988/the-solution-series-1-improving-maternity-services.pdf

Royal College of Midwives (2016). Undermining and bullying behaviours in the workplace i-learn course:
www.rcm.org.uk/i-learn-and-i-folio

Sexton J.B., Helmreich R.L., Neilands T.B., Rowan K., Vella K., Boyden J., Roberts P.R. & Thomas E.J. (2006). The Safety Attitudes Questionnaire: psychometric properties, benchmarking data, and emerging research. BMC Health Services Research volume

Simpson D., Hamilton S., McSherry R. and McIntosh R. (2019). Measuring and Assessing Healthcare Organisational Culture in the England's National Health Service: A Snapshot of Current Tools and Tool Use

UK Parliament: The safety of maternity services in England:
https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm5802/cmselect/cmhealth/19/1902.htm

Braithwaite J, Herkes J, Ludlow K, Testa L, Lamprell G. (2017). Association between organisational and workplace cultures, and patient outcomes: systematic review. BMJ Open2017;7:e017708. . doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2017-017708 pmid:29122796

Amy C. Edmondson (2018). The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth. ISBN: 978-1-119-47724-2

National Institute for Health Research (2009). Measuring and assessing organisational culture in the NHS