

Guidance for achieving the ‘additional sexual and reproductive health needs’ NMC requirement on the B/MMidwif programme

The achievement of the NMC requirement for “care of women across the life course with additional sexual and reproductive health needs” (NMC, 2023) is usually facilitated by arranging short supervised ‘spoke’ placements to relevant services or clinics during your normal midwifery ‘hub’ placements. These may be planned spoke weeks, or student-planned spoke days. Students are expected to observe and, where appropriate, participate in the care of women in that setting who are experiencing additional sexual and reproductive health needs. However, this NMC requirement can also be achieved during your normal midwifery placements.

When should I start arranging spoke visits?

You will all be allocated a 1-week planned spoke to a Gynae area during your ‘Block 4’ placement in Year 2. However, you can also arrange additional spoke days during a normal midwifery placement from the beginning of Year 2. We advise you to arrange your spokes during community, antenatal or postnatal placements – avoid using intrapartum time or other short placements.

You should discuss your plans for achieving your ‘additional sexual and reproductive health needs’ NMC requirements with your Academic Assessor (AcAs), during your MORA progression review and individual interview (at week 77 approx).

When do I need to have completed my spoke placements by?

You are normally expected to complete this spoke by the end of Year 2; however, spokes may be undertaken in year 3 if necessary – discuss this with your AcAs. All NMC requirements must be achieved by the end of the programme to enable you to register with the NMC as a midwife.

How many spoke visits or shifts do I need to do?

During your week-long spoke, you will be expected to complete 35 hours in a Gynae placement. This should give you plenty of opportunities to achieve and evidence this NMC requirement. You may wish to arrange spoke days in addition to this too.

How do I arrange additional spoke days?

Ask your PEF / Practice Supervisor / Assessor about relevant spokes available in your Trust/Community area. To minimise disruption to midwifery supervision, try to arrange your spokes when your Practice Supervisor is either a day off, on study leave or on annual leave, so discuss and agree your spoke plans with your Practice Supervisor prior to attending.

You should attempt to arrange your spoke visits yourself; taking ownership for your learning is an important skill you will need as a midwife (phone up and ask who to speak to about this), but you can also seek help from the Practice Education Facilitators (PEF) in the Trust to facilitate this process.

Do I need to prepare for my spoke week / additional spoke days?

Yes, you should read about the relevant speciality, formulate some learning objectives for yourself and prepare some questions for the staff. Look at your proficiencies in the MORA and think about ones you may be able to achieve on either your planned spoke week or additional spoke days. This will help you present as someone who is keen to learn and will help you get the most from your experience. Asking relevant questions will help your spoke Practice Supervisor meet your learning needs.

What else do I need to do to stay safe and keep others safe whilst on spoke visits?

You should have attended statutory updating in relation to safe moving and handling techniques and should be fully aware of your responsibilities in this matter. As always, you are instructed not to engage in moving and handling procedures that do not strictly comply with current Trust policies.

You should have attended mandatory infection control updates. You should practice all standard precautions and follow any additional instructions from the staff if caring for women with a specific infection risk.

How should I be supervised during my spoke visits?

You should gain your clinical experience of additional sexual and reproductive health needs at the level of contribution and/or participation; however, participation should only occur under the direct supervision of a registered nurse or midwife familiar with the woman's needs. **You should decline to undertake new activities for which you have not received appropriate instruction.**

If you arrange to work a shift on a ward area you have not worked on before, you should be orientated to the ward area at the beginning of that shift to meet statutory health and safety requirements.

You should **always** be supernumerary (in addition to normal staffing levels) during spoke placements but you should be recorded on the ward off-duty with a named registered professional identified as your Practice Supervisor (PS).

Is this activity assessed?

No formal, separate clinical assessment is required but you should collect feedback from your Practice Supervisor(s), and it is likely you will be able to achieve some MORA proficiencies during your spoke week. Therefore you will need to get these signed off by the Practice Supervisor you work with. You will also need your PS to sign your complementary placement experiences, as this is where you need to record evidence of this NMC requirement (see further details below). Your AcAs will monitor that the relevant experience has been achieved. Feedback from your Practice Supervisor(s) will be taken into account at your Summative Holistic Assessment, just like for any other assessed placement.

What do I need to record about my spoke visits?

You must record a summary of your experiences and your learning on the 'Record of Complementary Placement Experience' page in the MORA. This may also include women you have cared for within the maternity services who have additional sexual and reproductive health needs.

Progress with completing these sections should be reviewed by your AcAs at each review meeting. The onus is on you to ensure that these sections are updated regularly and completed before the end of the programme.

How many experiences do I need to record to achieve this NMC requirement?

The NMC do not specify a minimum number needed, but you need to be able to satisfy the following criteria (this is the wording in the NMC Requirements): *“care for women across the life course with additional sexual and reproductive needs”*. Note the word ‘women’ there, so you need **more than one**. Aim for a breadth of experiences to demonstrate this requirement, so some women who have additional sexual needs, some women with additional reproductive needs and women across the age spectrum.

How do I record my attendance?

Having recorded your experiences (as above), you must then ask your spoke placement Practice Supervisor(s) to confirm your attendance at the spoke and sign off your hours on your PARE timesheet. You should add note about where you went the using the “Add/Edit Note” facility on the timesheet.

What counts as a suitable spoke visit?

Different Trusts offer different learning experiences, so you need to enquire what is available within that Trust.

Examples of suitable gynae spoke placements include:

- Early Pregnancy Units (EPUs)
- Gynae Clinics, Colposcopy Clinics and Urodynamics Clinics.
- Gynaecology Theatre (We strongly recommend you try to arrange a day / half day in this area).
- Gynaecology ward

Examples of conditions women may have that can be used to evidence this NMC requirement:

- Fibroids
- Assisted conception (e.g. IVF)
- Cancer of the genital tract
- Malformations of the genital tract
- Genital tract infections
- Termination of pregnancy, miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, any bleeding in early pregnancy <24 weeks, hyperemesis, molar pregnancy

This list is not exhaustive, but designed to provide you with some examples of conditions women may have that could enable you to achieve this NMC requirement. If you are unsure whether a woman you have cared for fits into one of these sections, please discuss with your Practice Supervisor and/or your Academic Assessor.

Can I attend other spokes that are not related to this NMC requirement, at other points during the programme?

Yes, you can arrange other spokes provided they are relevant to your midwifery programme requirements, and you can link to achievement of your MORA proficiencies. If you are unsure about the suitability of a spoke, you should discuss the relevance with your Practice Supervisor and/or your Academic Assessor.

Reference

NMC, (2023). *Part 3: Standards for pre-registration midwifery programmes*. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards/standards-for-pre-registration-midwifery-programmes.pdf> (Accessed: 12Nov2024).