



Position Statement

Professional Accountability of the Midwife

Background

The *ICM International Definition of the Midwife* (2011) states that a "midwife is recognised as a responsible and accountable professional who works in partnership with women to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period, to conduct births on the midwife's own responsibility and to provide care for the newborn and the infant".

The *ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice* (2010) make clear that midwives assume responsibility and accountability for their practice, applying up-to-date knowledge and skills, and are responsible and accountable for clinical decisions.

Position

ICM recognises that midwives, as defined in the 'Definition of the Midwife', have a duty of care to the women and newborns they attend, and for their own actions and professional advice. This accountability extends to those actions taken on the advice and orders of others.

For midwives to be accountable for their own actions, they must:

- Have acquired the knowledge and skills to competently carry out actions as part of a recognised professional education programme.
- Have the opportunity to access continuous educational programmes for regularly updating and expanding the knowledge and skills that are the basis of competent midwifery practice.
- Be aware of the obligation not to undertake actions for which they have not received the necessary education to achieve competency.

Recommendations

Member Associations are urged to adopt this statement for action in their own environment if no similar statement already exists.

Related ICM Documents

ICM. 2010. Core Document. Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice.
Amended 2013.

ICM. 2011. Core Document. International Definition of the Midwife.

ICM. 2014. Core Document. International Code of Ethics for Midwives.

Adopted at Glasgow Council meeting, 2008

Reviewed and adopted at Prague Council meeting, 2014

Due for next review, 2020