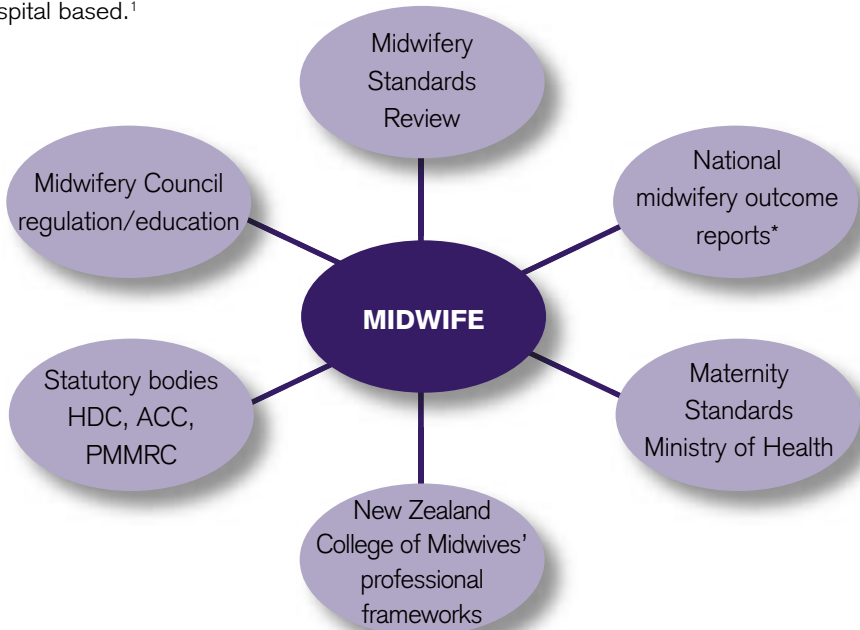




FACT SHEET 2

Quality of Midwifery Care in New Zealand

New Zealand midwives are publicly funded, fully integrated, community and hospital based.¹



* New Zealand College of Midwives and Midwifery and Maternity Providers Organisation produce annual reports that describe statistically the clinical outcomes women have when they are under the care of a midwife.

What are the quality frameworks that surround New Zealand midwives?

There are three main bodies that oversee the quality of New Zealand midwives - the Midwifery Council of New Zealand, the New Zealand College of Midwives and the Ministry of Health Maternity.

New Zealand midwifery frameworks meet all international regulatory, education and competency standards.

¹ Fact Sheet – New Zealand Midwives. www.midwives.org.nz

² Midwifery Standards Review - <http://www.midwife.org.nz/index.cfm/1,267.html>

³ New Zealand College of Midwives Standards of Practice. <http://www.midwife.org.nz/index.cfm/1,181.html>

⁴ New Zealand Maternity Standards, Ministry of Health, July 2011. www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/nz-maternity-standards

⁵ <http://www.nsf.health.govt.nz/apps/nsf.nsf/pagesmh/>

⁶ Maternity Services Notice Section 88. April 2007. <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/maternity-section88notice>

⁷ Midwifery News. New Zealand College of Midwives, June 2011.

⁸ New Zealand College of Midwives Report on MMPO-Midwives Care activities and outcomes 2007, 2008 & 2009

A joint venture between NZCOM & MMPO Published 2011 available from www.midwife.org.nz

⁹ Perinatal and Maternal Mortality Review Committee Reports. <http://www.pmmrc.health.govt.nz/>

The role of the Midwifery Council of New Zealand

New Zealand midwives are regulated by the Midwifery Council of New Zealand. The Council sets the competency and educational standard that all midwives must meet to gain a practicing certificate. All midwives must hold an Annual Practising Certificate which is renewed annually through a formal recertification process set by the Midwifery Council.

The role of the New Zealand College of Midwives

New Zealand midwives undertake a Midwifery Standards Review (MSR)² every two years. This forms part of the profession's quality assurance programme and is a compulsory component of the Midwifery Council of New Zealand Recertification Programme.

New Zealand midwives are required to provide information, consumer feedback and clinical data to demonstrate the quality of the midwifery care they provide when they present for MSR.

The College of Midwives has published the standards of practice for midwives to follow when working with women, wherever that work may be in their Handbook for Practice.³

The role of the Ministry of Health

The New Zealand Maternity Standards provide a framework for the Ministry and also the District Health Boards in relation to their responsibilities for a quality maternity service.⁴

The District Health Board Maternity Service Specifications⁵ outline their obligations in relation to the staffing and services that must be provided in maternity facilities that core midwives are employed by and community midwives access under a national Access Agreement.

The national framework⁶ that sets out the service requirements for all Lead Maternity Carers – midwives, general practitioners or obstetricians is the Maternity Services Notice Pursuant to Section 88 of the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000.

Section 88 ensures equity of access and a national standard. The Christchurch earthquakes demonstrated how well this system works. This national framework and the midwifery networks are so well developed and integrated that women continued to receive maternity services when other health services 'fell over'.⁷

How do midwives provide a quality service?

The majority of women in New Zealand give birth in a maternity facility with a midwife in attendance that is known to them. Midwives support women to birth in all settings. Approximately 4-6 % of women choose to give birth at home.⁸

New Zealand women have had a midwife present at their birth for over 100 years. This care is free for women who are New Zealand residents.

Midwives are the contact and referral agent for women to access community, hospital and specialist services. Maternity care reaches all New Zealand women whatever their socio economic status or ethnicity.

Midwives are educated to recognise when medical intervention and referral is necessary and to provide emergency treatment as necessary. Midwives work closely with doctors, other health professionals and community support agencies.

All current maternity data indicators demonstrate maternal and perinatal mortality rates similar to Australia and the United Kingdom – and lower than many other countries.⁹