

AUT

A FUTURE IN  
**MIDWIFERY**





## WHAT IS MIDWIFERY?

Helping to bring life into the world is immensely satisfying as a career. A midwife is the main provider of care, support and information for women, their partners and family/whānau during pregnancy, labour and birth. Once the baby is born, midwives then monitor its health, development and growth, offering advice and guidance for parents and families/whānau for six weeks following the birth.

Expectant mothers select a Lead Maternity Carer (LMC) to provide their principal maternity care, and this can be either midwives, general practitioners with a diploma in obstetrics, or obstetricians. Over 80 per cent of women in New Zealand select midwives as their LMC, and register with them in their first three months of pregnancy.

Midwives work in partnership with women, providing or supporting continuity of care throughout the woman's pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal experience. They work collaboratively with other health professionals such as obstetricians, physicians, anaesthetists, neonatal nurses and GPs, as well as social services such as lactation consultants, Plunket, Women's Refuge and social workers to ensure that all medical, health or social needs of women and their babies are met.

Childbirth is open to outcomes that are unexpected, unplanned and may occasionally be distressing to the woman and the baby. The midwife must bring the 'spirit of safe practice' to her work by actively watching, anticipating, responding and reflecting on the uniqueness of every situation.

Are you fascinated by the birth experience? Can you be relied upon to stay calm under intense pressure? Do you want to be the person that a woman relies upon in her most rewarding life experience? Do you respect women and families and their right to expert and individualised care? If so, a career in midwifery might be for you.





## OUTLOOK AND TRENDS

### High opportunities for midwives in Auckland

Auckland has a high birth rate and large population, and consequently Auckland District Health Boards (DHBs) and LMC midwives can have difficulty keeping up with demand for their services.

### Focus on practice

The Ministry of Health, the Midwifery Council, the College of Midwives and others, have been working on initiatives to improve birth outcomes for mothers and babies. This includes initiatives focusing on training and support, including the requirement that final year midwifery undergraduates undergo a minimum of 80% clinical practice under supervision.

### First year of practice support

The Midwifery First Year of Practice programme became mandatory for graduate midwives in February 2015. The programme provides newly qualified midwives with extra clinical support, mentoring and supervision, with the oversight of the Midwifery Council.

Source: Ministry of Health, 2015

### Lead Maternity Carer model

The lead maternity carer (LMC) model of primary maternity care is unique to New Zealand. All other services fit around this model, providing a seamless maternity service to meet each woman's individual needs. According to the 2014 Maternity Consumer Survey, 90% of women using LMC maternity services were highly satisfied. This compares to a 77% satisfaction rate for other maternity services.

### Sustainability

Research shows the primary factor that sustains midwives through their career is the experience of working in partnership with women and their families/ whanau. This is reflected by their support of each woman and her family's childbirth aspirations and endeavour to empower them through their childbirth experiences.

Source – NZ College of Midwives

### Impact of New Zealand society on practice

It is important midwives have a clear understanding of the ever-changing society in which they practice because midwifery care and childbirth take place within a society that influences and shapes women and families reality on many different levels. Yet, as a health professional, a midwife's practice is often impacted on by Government Acts and legislation.

Source – AUT Midwifery Department



## WORK SETTINGS & ROLES

The day-to-day activities of a midwife are diverse. They could be speaking with groups of expectant mothers about the birthing experience, examining pregnant women to check pre-natal development, acting as the sole health professional present at the birth of a new baby, or travelling to a new mother's home to provide crucial support and reassurance during the momentous first weeks of a baby's life.

Midwives work for a range of employers:

54% of midwives work in public hospitals.

32% are self-employed in the community and either work independently or as part of a team.

4% are employed in private hospitals or birthing units.

2% work in the education sector in training roles.

Source – Midwifery Council of New Zealand, '2013 Midwifery Workforce Survey'

**Public hospital midwives** are employed by DHBs and practise their profession in public hospitals where they work in hospital wards or primary birth unit settings. Hospital midwives work shifts, day or evening, so they do not follow a woman through the whole birthing process if her shift finishes before the birth

**Community midwives** can either be self-employed sole practitioners or work in a team of other midwives in community healthcare settings. They are on call 24/7 and visit and work with women during the day, as well as attending their birth at whatever time of the day or night it may occur. This means reliable transport (and child care) is an important requirement for anyone wanting to work in community healthcare settings. A lead maternity carer (LMC) midwife will care for, on average, five women each month. This equates to approximately thirty women on their list at any one time.

## SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

- Competently care for women through the normal childbirth experience, from pre-conceptual care up to six weeks post-partum, working within the scope of professional midwifery practice

- Initiate appropriate consultation and referral processes, when required, working collaboratively with other health professionals
- Demonstrate midwifery partnership and application of cultural safety and Turanga Kaupapa to midwifery practice
- Demonstrate sound clinical judgement and effective technical skills
- Provide effective care in emergency situations
- Communicate effectively so women and their families make informed decisions
- Practise with professional integrity as an autonomous midwife, accountable and responsible for her own practice and the legal and ethical standards of her midwifery practice
- Respect the expertise of other health professionals and work with them collaboratively
- Up to date with current issues relating to women, midwives, maternity care, health and the health care system

## PERSONAL QUALITIES

- strong respect for women, pregnancy and childbirth
- patient and caring
- able to remain calm during emergencies
- observant and analytical

## SALARY GUIDE

Pay for midwives employed by DHBs varies depending on their length of service, seniority, and their shift rosters.

	Salary (per year)
New midwives	\$47,000
Midwives with 2-5 years' experience	Up to \$64,000
Midwives with more than 5 years' experience	\$64,000 – \$70,000
Senior midwives with more than 8 years' experience	\$94,000 or more
Self-employed midwives/ lead maternity carers	\$70,000 and \$150,000, depending on the number of women they care for.

Sources: 'District Health Board/NZ Nurses Organisation Collective Agreement, 1 March 2012 – 28 February 2015'; NZ College of Midwives.

Salary range is indicative of the New Zealand job market at the time of publication (early 2016) and should only be seen as a guideline.

## PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

After gaining a Bachelor of Health Science, midwifery graduates sit a national midwifery exam in order to register with the Midwifery Council of New Zealand and gain an Annual Practising Certificate. This certificate is renewed annually through a formal re-certification process set by the Midwifery Council.

## THE AUT APPROACH

Practical experience is a key part of all midwifery programmes. Over half of the programme at AUT is spent in clinical practice – students complete 2,400 practical hours in clinical placements that immerse them in the real world of midwifery.

AUT is the only New Zealand university to provide a bachelor's degree qualification in midwifery, and the only provider in Auckland. Wintec, CIT and Otago Polytechnic are the other three tertiary providers offering midwifery qualifications in New Zealand.

AUT is home to the Centre for Midwifery and Women's Health Research. This is the research arm of the School of Midwifery and is guided by an external advisory group. The centre assists and supports midwives and women by keeping them informed of relevant evidence in practice.

The overall aim of the centre is to develop a unique position of leadership internationally in midwifery partnership and practice.

A major goal is to foster improved childbirth experiences. To this end, it works collaboratively with individuals, families, institutions, health service funders and providers, professional bodies and community organisations.

## FURTHER STUDY OPTIONS

For those wanting more specialised study, AUT postgraduate level programmes include the Postgraduate Certificate and Postgraduate Diploma in Health Science, specialising in Midwifery, Masters of Health Practice or Health Science specialising in Midwifery, and Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Health Sciences.

Recent research in the school includes topics on sustainability, place of birth, maternal mental health, disability and health, and fertility, infertility and assisted reproductive technologies.



A portrait of Dianne Hemopo, a woman with dark hair pulled back, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a patterned top with green, blue, and white geometric shapes. The background is a light-colored wall with horizontal lines.

## DIANNE HEMOPO *TE RARAWA*

Registered Midwife / Workforce Co-ordinator,  
Māori Health

Counties Manukau District Health Board

"Women's health has always been of interest to me, in particular pregnancy and childbirth. I explored being a midwife in my late teens but then waited until after I had my own two children to pursue my studies. They were my motivation to enrol at university and gain a degree.

My current role is co-ordinating the Pu Ora Matatini Midwifery Scholarship Programme for Counties Manukau Health. I provide academic, pastoral and financial wrap around support to midwifery students. I also work part-time at Middlemore Hospital, mostly on the maternity ward. This is a 40 bed ward for high acuity antenatal (before birth) and postnatal women. It's an incredibly busy but rewarding place to work.

In Counties Manukau we have an incredibly diverse population from primary care women to high risk obstetric conditions. I enjoy working in an environment where we have to be ready for anything. It wouldn't be unusual to go from a water birth to a caesarean section in the same week.

Our population has complex social and medical issues, and this can be reflected in our workload. Whether you're working in a facility or out in the community, you may be the only health professional the whānau have contact with, so you have to know about other support services out there such as mental health, osteopaths or dietitians. Navigating your way through the referral systems can be a challenge, but important for the whānau and us as midwives.

In the future I'd like to explore a pathway in midwifery education and/or leadership. During the short time since I graduated I've been a self-employed midwife, core midwife and workforce co-ordinator – I'm so passionate about all areas of midwifery."

### EMPLOYER COMMENT

"Midwives are able to use their autonomy as core health staff to deliver safe and skilled care. They ensure that education is given to women and their families concerning pregnancy, childbirth and education, which includes parent crafting and breastfeeding. Specialised duties can involve caring for high risk women under the responsibility of the Obstetrics and Gynaecology team, and caring for the unwell neonate under the care of the neonatologists.

Dianne contributes to our team strongly through the work she does on the maternity wards, supporting the management plan of women and babies through direct and effective consultation with the multidisciplinary team."

**Tish Taihia**  
Charge Midwife Manager  
Maternity South  
Middlemore Hospital



## USEFUL WEBSITES

### Midwifery Council of New Zealand

[www.midwiferycouncil.health.nz](http://www.midwiferycouncil.health.nz)

### NZ College of Midwives

[www.midwife.org.nz](http://www.midwife.org.nz)

### Safe Motherhood Inter-agency Group

[www.safemotherhood.org](http://www.safemotherhood.org)

### International Confederation of Midwives

[www.internationalmidwives.org](http://www.internationalmidwives.org)

### Health Pages

[www.healthpages.co.nz](http://www.healthpages.co.nz)

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about Midwifery studies and the Bachelor of Health Science, visit

[www.aut.ac.nz/midwifery](http://www.aut.ac.nz/midwifery)

### FUTURE STUDENTS

Contact the Future Student Advisory team for more information: [www.aut.ac.nz/enquire](http://www.aut.ac.nz/enquire)

[futurestudents@aut.ac.nz](mailto:futurestudents@aut.ac.nz)

 @AUTFutureStudents

### CURRENT AUT STUDENTS

Contact the Student Hub Advisors team for more information: 0800 AUT UNI (0800 288 864)

[www.aut.ac.nz/enquire](http://www.aut.ac.nz/enquire) | [studenthub@aut.ac.nz](mailto:studenthub@aut.ac.nz)

 @AUTEmployabilityandCareers

### EMPLOYABILITY & CAREERS

For other Future Career Sheets visit:


[www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets](http://www.aut.ac.nz/careersheets)


For employability and career support, AUT students can book an appointment through <https://elab.aut.ac.nz/>


### SOUTH CAMPUS


640 Great South Road, Manukau, Auckland

### CONNECT WITH US NOW

 @autuni

 @AUTuni

 AUTUniversity

 @autuni

The information contained in this career sheet is correct at time of printing, August 2019.

