

Description

A student midwife's account; the NMC Future Midwife

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I am a first-year student undertaking the BSc in Midwifery Sciences programme at Queens University Belfast (QUB) alongside sixty other students. To date, our midwifery cohort have completed seven weeks of midwifery education based at the university and a community placement lasting six weeks.

When the community placement finished and the Christmas holidays were over, my mind-set was attempting to shift back into classroom mode. I received an invitation to attend the first Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) celebration event in Riddle Hall, QUB on 15th January 2020, to launch the New standards for the future midwife – *My Future, My Midwife*.

> This invitation was a welcome boost to a dreary dark January, and a fantastic way to kick-start the World Health Organisation Year of the Midwife – 2020; I felt very excited!

On arrival to Riddle Hall, QUB, I was enthralled by the location, a grand Victorian residence with many of its original features intact. Each fireplace, wooden panel and stair balustrade, had a story to tell no doubt. I was curious why the launch was being held at Riddle Hall and it was poignant to later learn that it was established in 1913 as a residence for female Queen's University Belfast students, due to a generous donation from two sisters. Ironic that here I was, a female student midwife, ready to begin a lifetime of learning enabling evidence-based and safe practice for women and their babies.

Before the launch began guests were treated to a delicious buffet lunch and given the opportunity to converse with others. Some of my fellow students and I felt nervous and intimidated being among a high calibre of lead midwives and other health care professionals, however, these feelings quickly diminished. The atmosphere was relaxed, warm and inviting and guests kindly introduced themselves to our table and began friendly conversations.

Frances McConville, the World Health Organisation's Midwifery Advisor provided an inspiring opening address, highlighting how midwives around the world can make an amazing health impact for babies, women and their families.

Professor Mary Renfrew then outlined the new Standards which had been developed through her leadership and underpinned by her work on The Lancet framework for Quality Maternal and New-born Care.

Other speakers included Andrea Sutcliffe CBE, Chief Executive and Registrar of NMC and the Midwife Advisor for the Department of Health, Dr Dale Spence. All speakers were enthusiastic, motivated and positive about the Standards of Proficiency for Midwives and the future for midwives, women, new-born infants and their families. It was encouraging as a student, to be briefed on the focus and thought put into the standards for the future education of student midwives.

For me the highlight of the day was listening to midwife Aisling and mother of two Mary-Kate. Aisling cared for Mary-Kate during the birth of her first child and was also present for the birth of Mary-Kate's second child. When difficulties arose during her second birth Mary-Kate commends Aisling for her speedy response and quick action that ended with a positive result for her and her baby. Aisling's reaction to Mary-Kate's praise was modest and she commented that she has only done 'what any midwife would do.'

Their story was special and emotive and the unique bond between them was evidenced through their body language and conversation. During this time I felt no one else in the room apart from them and I, it was a personal moment that impacted me greatly.

> During their talk I understood the phrase '*being with woman*' and how a midwife can make a huge difference.

Coming away from the launch, I felt fortunate and enthused about the exciting times ahead. Thank you NMC for letting me share in this special day and for the midwifery lecturers at QUB who facilitated and encouraged my attendance.

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