

Description

Did you know the Editorial Board for The

Student Midwife is entirely made up of student and newly-qualified midwives? We commission, write and edit all the articles that fill our wonderful journal, so we know we're bringing content that is of the most interest and use to you. Let's dive in and meet one of the team!

This month we're talking to Laura Henry, a midwifery intern and pre-registration midwife in Ireland.

What's your role at TSM and how long have you been involved?

I've been an editorial board member since June 2020, mainly working on our Special Report section which is a wonderfully diverse part of the journal. It covers everything from student-led initiatives to the careers people had before they became midwives. I also hold a role in mentoring new editorial board members.

What's your favourite part of being part of TSM?

I absolutely love how closely I get to work with student midwives that have such different experiences in life in and outside of midwifery. I'm so grateful for the friends I've made here. And of course, the opportunity to learn and grow.

What's your background?

Despite always knowing I wanted to be a midwife, it took me a long time to get here. I didn't get great marks in my state exams, so did a pre-nursing course which was an ultra-competitive route into college. I missed out on my place despite good results and did a year of intellectual disability nursing. I didn't love it, so repeated my state exams and worked for another year to get the money to pay my fees, before finally starting my training in September 2017. I've worked as a healthcare assistant and in a fast-food restaurant, and other odd jobs relating to elections like being a polling clerk and counting votes.

What are your main values that drive you?

Advocacy is the core of everything I do – for service users and for my colleagues. I've always been a bit of an activist and have joked that I need one good protest a year to keep myself going. Now in midwifery, I describe myself as an everyday activist. I encourage students to know their rights and stand up for themselves. I provide families with evidence-based information to guide their decision making, and I do what I can to support my colleagues in good times and not so good times. Along with this is a practice of treating everyone with love and compassion. When I spend time caring for families, I heap love on them in the form of words of encouragement, cups of tea, slices of buttery toast and reassurance.

What's your area of passion?

Aside from making sure that my practice is inclusive and makes the pregnancy continuum as normal as possible for families, I am hugely passionate about supporting people on their journey through midwifery right from aspiring to qualified midwives. I believe it is so important to encourage each other and offer positive feedback when we see things being done well, in addition to giving people the information to help them in tough times.

What's the most pressing issue facing the sector?

Staffing is a huge issue, which isn't news to anyone. Midwives are tired people with heavy workloads, trying to do their very best for the people in their care and keep themselves whole at the same time. Shifts with less feet on the ground, less heads to put together, less hands to help each other with is a huge strain in any sector. In caring professions, that strain is felt all the more keenly.

How do you think the service could be improved?

This might be sappy, and simplistic, but more love and less fear – ultimately achieved by better staffing. If we were in a space that was compassionate, being unsure and making mistakes might be a less terrifying and shameful experience.

Days or nights?

Days.

What's your preferred assessment style?

I’m a rambler (clearly) so personally I find essays the least difficult.

What’s your one tip for student midwives?

Have a plan, particularly for tough days and times when you need help. Know who to call for advice, and for a rant. Know what will help you find your feet when you stumble.

What’s for dinner tonight?

Veggie pizza and potato wedges, home-made by my multi-talented partner. **TSM**

Category

1. Student Midwife Blog

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