

The Regulation of Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors

Summary of the legislation

2.32 The legislation sets up a statutory framework for the regulation of nurses, midwives and health visitors. This is made up of five bodies: a Central Council, which is a corporate body with a UK wide remit; and four National Boards, which are non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) carrying out specific functions within their respective countries.

Central Council

2.33 The functions of the Council are broadly to:

- establish and improve standards of training and professional conduct for nurses, midwives and health visitors (these are described as the principal functions);
- determine the requirements for entry to training and the kind, content and standard of courses leading to registration;
- maintain a Register of qualified nurses, midwives and health visitors;
- make rules regulating the practice of midwifery;
- make rules regulating removal and suspension from, and restoration to, the Register, as well as cautions.

2.34 In addition, the Council **may** make provisions regarding kind, content and standard of further training; and it has **powers** to provide advice to nurses, midwives & health visitors on standards of professional conduct. In carrying out its functions, the Council must have (“shall have”) “proper regard” for the interests of all groups within the professions.

National Boards

2.35 The functions of the Boards are to:

- approve institutions to provide courses of training;
- ensure that courses of training meet Central Council requirements as to their kind, content and standard;
- hold or arrange for others to hold such examinations as are necessary to satisfy requirements for registration or additional qualifications;
- collaborate with Council in promotion of improved training methods; and
- provide advice and guidance to local supervising authorities for midwives.

2.36 In addition, the Boards are to carry out any other functions prescribed by the relevant Secretary of State.