Yvonne Bronsky

I'm Yvonne Bronsky, the local Supervising Authority Midwifery Officer for South East and West of Scotland.

I think first and foremost the important part of statutory supervision of midwives is about protecting the public so whatever we do within the framework of statutory supervision our main focus is protecting the public.

And one of the most important things is making sure that midwives are supported during their practice so every midwife who is on the register from the National Midwifery Council has appointed to her a named supervisor of midwives and that named supervisor midwife is there throughout the year to support her and give her guidance regarding her registration and how she maintains her competencies.

So she's there in that supportive environment where she can guide her towards learning opportunities, identify where there are issues where the midwife herself may feel she needs extra support; be it going into a new clinical area, or researching, looking at new evidence based guidelines or where she has difficulties adapting to new styles of working or new environments within the clinical area.

That's in the supportive side of it and within our Nursing and Midwifery Council regulatory body there is the midwives rules and standards and very clearly within those rules and standards it states that every practising midwife has to meet with her supervisor of midwives once a year and it's that opportunity if it hasn't been afforded to them throughout the year for the midwife and her named supervisor of midwives to meet together and go over the learning outcomes in the past year. To reflect on her practice and identify where there are practice needs that are still unmet. So there's the sort of supportive side ensuring that midwives are fit to practice and the engaging supporting part of encouraging the midwife and helping that midwife develop her skill set.

I think one of the most important aspects of a supervisor of midwives is she has to have leadership skills - she has to have that leadership quality because she's leading in the service supporting midwives and providing that environment she has to be aware that if I go back to the signposting analogy she has to be aware of where to signpost her supervisee - her midwife to avenues where she can learn the competencies or discover new competencies or upgrade her current competencies.

So there's that leadership aspect but also what's important for me as the midwifery officer in appointing supervising midwives is that they demonstrate qualities that show that they are a role model because they have that extra knowledge - there is a preparation course that is accredited through the nursing and midwifery council so therefore they have the extra learning points that they have undertaken at a masters level.

I would be expecting supervising midwives to be that role model as well as being a leader in the service. But again under the umbrella of protecting the public they have to be seen as a true advocate for women because whatever they do it's got to be under that umbrella of protecting the public by ensuring that midwives are fit to practice.