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## HOME BIRTH

**Guideline produced by:** West of Scotland Supervisors of Midwives  
Guideline Development Group

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**Approved by:** Supervisors of Midwives Guideline Development Group and the Local Supervising Authority Midwifery Officer

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### Key Points to Consider

1. Supervisors must support midwives in providing normal midwifery practice and in being confident and competent in caring for women having home births.
2. Supervisors should support midwives to encourage informed choice around place of birth, giving due consideration to Government policy, NMC Standards (2006) and women's preferred choice.
3. Supervisors should ensure that all women have access to unbiased information and current evidence regarding home birth as a safe and realistic choice.
4. The woman's obstetric history should be taken into consideration in conjunction with continual risk assessment.
5. Each NHS Board should have a policy that includes a planned pattern of care for women requesting a home birth - this should incorporate relevant health and safety issues. The policy should include births both with and without medical support, to safeguard the mother and baby and also the midwife in emergency situations.
6. Should a home birth be considered high risk, the Supervisor of Midwives should be notified and informed of any perceived risk to mother or baby and of any other matters affecting the case. The Supervisors should support the woman and the midwife and together agree a plan of care.
7. The midwife and the Supervisor must appropriately document all details of information given to the woman and of the discussion, including the final decision made by the woman.
8. It is recommended that the midwife has appropriate support for all home births.
9. Current NMC Guidance in respect of home births should be followed, e.g. NMC Circulars.



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### **References:**

Scottish Executive Health Department (2001) *A Framework for Maternity Services in Scotland*. SEHD, Edinburgh.

Scottish Executive (2002) *Implementing A Framework for Maternity Services in Scotland: Overview Report of the Expert Group on Acute Maternity Services*. SEHD, Edinburgh.

NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (2009) *Pathway for Normal Maternity Care*, NHS QIS, Edinburgh

NMC Circular 8-2006, *Midwives and home birth*.

NMC (2006), *Standards for the preparation and practice of supervisors of midwives*. NMC, London.

Additional information has been published by the NMC in the Advice Sheet 'Freebirthing' (2008).