

The story so far of our core beliefs and values:

Having grown to over 30 employees over the last few years and having successfully established an NHS pilot, Neighbourhood Midwives decided in the Autumn of 2018 to take a moment to reflect upon what made the work meaningful to the group of people who had chosen to work as part of this young social enterprise.

Independent specialist Jackie Le Fèvre who concentrates on projects to explore culture and values became involved and helped to put together a short organisational survey to capture insights and thoughts about what working life is like as part of Neighbourhood Midwives.

The survey had two parts. The first a set of 5 multiple choice questions to get a broad measure of how people felt about different aspects of the organisation at the moment. The second two open questions. One asked for a sense of what makes being part of Neighbourhood Midwives something worth doing. The other for an example or story about Neighbourhood Midwives at its best – a time when everything just came together and it felt really good.

There were no right or wrong answers simply an opportunity to highlight those aspects of the work and how the work is done that people appreciate and want to nurture into the future.

On 3rd December the results of the multiple choice questions and an analysis of the highest priority values present in the free form narrative replies to the open questions were reviewed during a workshop at Annie's house involving founders and newer recruits, midwives and central support team members. Using these results as a starting point, colleagues worked on a variety of reflective tasks to pinpoint what really characterises this organisation and describes something of the unique spirit that runs through all of the services it offers.

Surfacing and expressing the values and beliefs is only the first step. For example being able to express its core values through recruitment processes has been shown to increase the likelihood of attracting applicants who will ultimately thrive as part of that particular organisation. Using shared values to design interview and selection questions and activities, gets beyond the conventional examination of qualifications and track record to understand the individual and improve the panels appreciation of 'how' the candidates do 'what' they do and 'why' this is the work and the place that speaks to them.

Now that we have our first version of our shared core beliefs and values, the long haul work of consciously and deliberately living them begins. The point of undertaking this work in this way is that we can be confident these values we have described are already here. Our values have emerged from the first hand stories of our lived experience at Neighbourhood Midwives. Now that those values are no longer implicit but explicit, we have the opportunity to make even better use of them than before.

Our Purpose: To do everything in our power to enable women to have the best possible birth experience and to make a successful transition to parenthood.

We believe:

- that birth is a physiological event that sometimes needs assistance, not a medical event that is sometimes physiological
- that the experience of birth has an impact on women and their families that is felt for the rest of their lives
- that ensuring women are at the heart of midwifery care which is based on relationships is the best way to achieve positive short and long term outcomes for families and midwives
- there is strong evidence that continuity of midwifery care is deeply appreciated by women and midwives
- continuity of relationships builds trust which is a powerful force
- when people are trusted and given the right conditions to organise their work they both perform better and feel more fulfilled
- midwifery services do not have to be hierarchical, our constructive disruption of the status quo is based on voice, listening, learning, appreciation, choice and embracing accountability.

We value:

Confidence: in ourselves as practitioners and in the service we provide by being up-to-date, evidence based, reliable and holistic

Innovation: taking responsibility for developing working practices which prove other ways are possible

Growth: accomplishing significant things co-operatively

Heart: building supportive relationships through empathy and kindness combined with determination

Love: physically and emotionally nurturing women, families and each other