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| Manifesto: *(demonstrate who you are, why you are looking for a seat on the group and what you can offer)* |
| 2020 has been a year like no other. The Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented territory for both midwifery services and midwifery education. As a first-year student midwife (STMW) at De Montfort University, I, like thousands of other STMWs across the United Kingdom, faced barriers in how I wanted, and expected, to provide care to birthing people and their families. I also navigated the world of online learning, from my kitchen table, with varying degrees of success. However, looking back over the year, what struck me most was how people came together to support each other. Friends and families, who lived miles apart, connected over Zoom, and communities rallied around those in need, by doing their shopping and checking in on their wellbeing. As all STMWs know, compassion and kindness are core elements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council’s Code of Conduct, which, if elected, would form the basis for all my work, as a member of the RCM’s Student Midwifery Forum (SMF).  Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the SMF is likely to be hosted virtually for the upcoming year. Some people may feel that because of this, STMW voices will be pushed to the side-line; however, this is exactly why we need a strong and cohesive forum to represent us, now more than ever. If I was elected to be the voice of the Midlands and the East of England, I would fight for our region's voice to be heard and not falter when discussions became hard or uncomfortable. As a current second-year STMW I feel confident and passionate in advocating for others, including those who may be afraid or are unable to speak up. Through taking the time to truly listen to STMWs, in an open and non-judgmental arena, I hope to learn about what really matters to them. If elected, I also intend to initiate and intensify key conversations that can then trigger actions to be taken towards improving midwifery education and clinical practice. For example, decolonising midwifery education is a concept which gained much momentum due to the Black Lives Matter protests, back in May. However, without a unified student voice demanding for its implementation, I fear that it may never reach fruition. Consequently, STMWs and the birthing people who we provide care for will continue to be negatively affected.  Although we are a cohort of STMWs, we are all individual and unique. The diversity that we have is beautiful and should be celebrated. Every STMWs input and experience is valid, and when they are all brought together, I believe that we can use them to help influence midwifery services and education to be truly inclusive and representative. If elected, as the voice of the Midlands and the East of England region, I intend to showcase, to the SMF, what makes STMW’s from this region so diverse and invaluable and highlight what can be learnt from them.  Thank you for taking the time to read my manifesto. |
| **(No more than 500 words.)** |