

The NMC register Northern Ireland

1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020



About us

Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the professional regulator of more than 700,000 nursing and midwifery professionals, we have an important role to play in making this a reality.

Our core role is to **regulate**. First, we promote high professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England. Secondly, we maintain the register of professionals eligible to practise. Thirdly, we investigate when care goes wrong – something that affects less than one percent of professionals each year.

To regulate well, we **support** our professions and the public. We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout people's careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address new challenges. We also support people involved in our investigations, and we're increasing our visibility so people feel engaged and empowered to shape our work.

Regulating and supporting our professions allows us to **influence** health and social care. We share intelligence from our regulatory activities and work with our partners to support workforce planning and sector-wide decision making. We use our voice to speak up for a healthy and inclusive working environment for our professions.



About our register

We keep the register of all nurses and midwives eligible to practise in the UK, and nursing associates who can practise in England. We currently publish data from our register every six months. Our previous report was a mid-year update that we published in December 2019.

How to interpret our data

Not everyone on our permanent register will currently be working as nurses, midwives and nursing associates, or in the field they're registered in.

We collect the registered addresses of the professionals on our register. The data in the report is about those professionals with registered addresses in Northern Ireland.

People from the UK, European Economic Area (EEA) and outside the EEA all join our register through different routes. When we say that someone is from the UK, EEA or outside the EEA, we mean that they joined our register through that particular route.

So far, all the nursing associates on our register joined it via the UK route.

The number of joiners, leavers and total people registered won't add up exactly. That's because the joiners' data only includes people joining the register for the first time. It doesn't include people who re-joined after a break from practising.

The number of joiners and leavers are cumulative totals from the whole year (1 April–31 March). We're working to improve our systems so we can provide a more complete picture of joiners and leavers in the future.

Our register changes every day and can vary considerably from the start of the month to the end of the month. Therefore, our data only offers a snapshot in time. This report gives a snapshot of our register on 31 March 2020.

In March 2020 we established a Covid-19 temporary register to support the UK's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Data from the Covid-19 temporary register is included in its own section at the end of this report. For clarity, data from the Covid-19 temporary register is not included in figures 1–9.

Size of our permanent register in Northern Ireland on 31 March

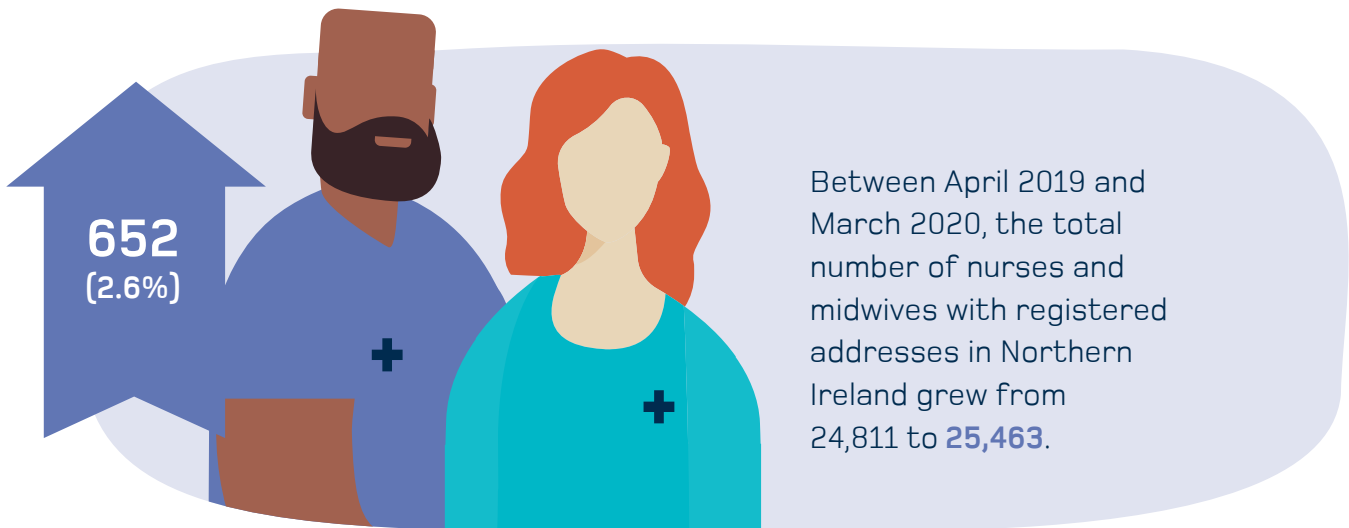


Figure 1
Total number of people on the register by registration type with an address in Northern Ireland

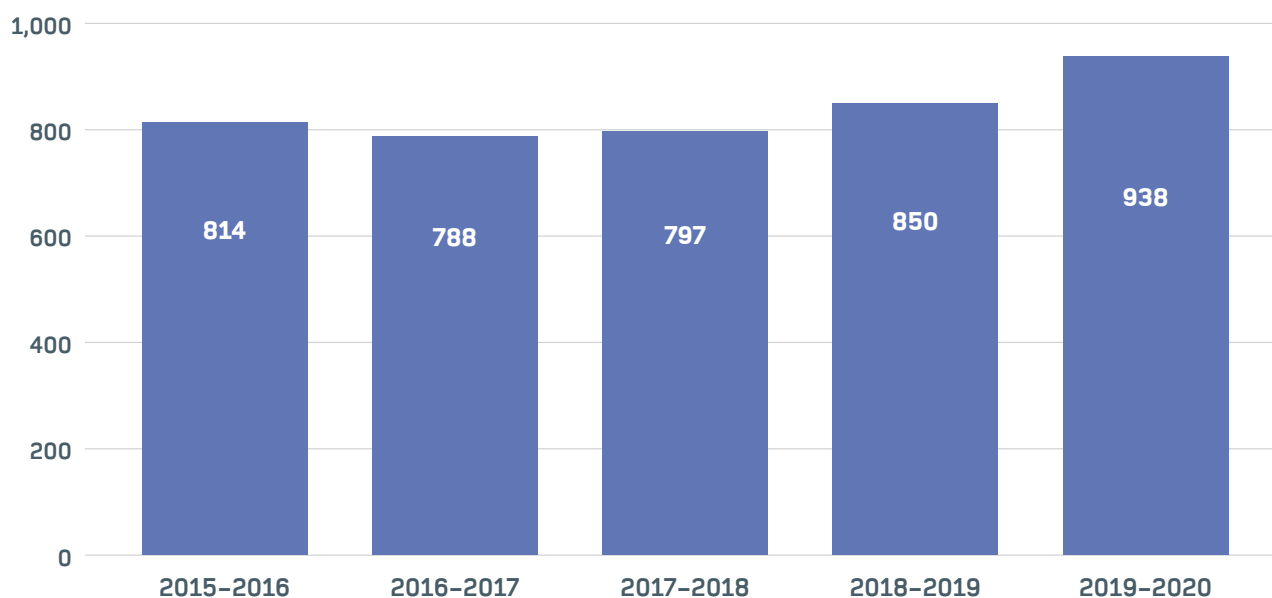
Registration type	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Nurse	22,299	22,439	22,967	23,324	23,953
Midwife	1,115	1,144	1,173	1,193	1,212
Dual registrant (nurse and midwife)	340	305	308	294	298
Total	23,754	23,888	24,448	24,811	25,463

Joining the permanent register

A total of 938 people joined our permanent register in Northern Ireland for the first time in 2019–2020. That's 88 (10.4 percent) more than the previous year.

Figure 2

People with an address in Northern Ireland joining the permanent register for the first time



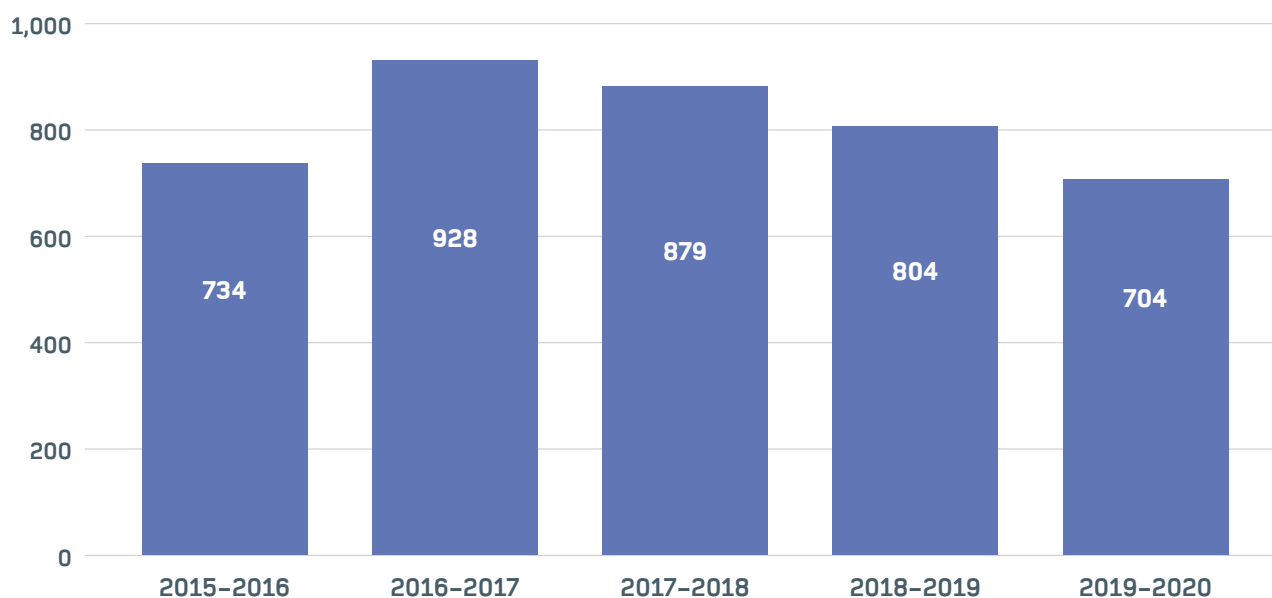
Joiners' data doesn't include those re-joining the register having previously left. Also, the overall number on the register is from one point in time, whereas the joiners' and leavers' data are the sum of activity over twelve months. Therefore, these figures won't add up exactly.

Leaving the permanent register

The number of people leaving the permanent register in Northern Ireland peaked in 2016–2017 and has since decreased year-on-year since then. This is similar to the UK-wide picture. In 2019–2020, 704 people in Northern Ireland left our register. That's 100 (12.4 percent) less than the previous year.

Figure 3

People with an address in Northern Ireland leaving the permanent register



Professionals who trained in the EEA

There were minor changes in the number of people on the permanent register in Northern Ireland who trained in the EEA. Romania was the most popular EEA country of training, with 274 registered professionals, more than twice as many as the Republic of Ireland on 131.

Figure 4

Total number of people on the register in Northern Ireland by country of training in the EEA (top five countries)

	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Romania	194	237	266	267	274
Republic of Ireland	81	97	105	121	131
Poland	62	63	66	69	70
Portugal	64	64	68	68	67
Italy	33	35	30	30	30
Total EEA	511	580	619	641	658

Professionals who trained outside the EEA

There were significant increases in the number of professionals on the permanent register in Northern Ireland who trained outside the EEA, especially in percentage terms from Nigeria and Zimbabwe (176.2 percent and 156.3 percent increases, respectively).

Figure 5

Total number of people on the register in Northern Ireland by country of training outside the EEA (top five countries)

	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Philippines	749	760	829	877	982
India	622	620	641	644	680
Nigeria	8	10	10	21	58
South Africa	33	39	41	42	43
Zimbabwe	<5	5	10	16	41
Total outside EEA	1,495	1,523	1,624	1,701	1,936

This data is based on people on our permanent register with a registered address in Northern Ireland. Some professionals on our permanent register who trained overseas may still have registered addresses outside the UK and therefore will not be included here. Data on the number of people on our permanent register with addresses outside the UK can be found in the UK registration data report.

Profile of the permanent register in Northern Ireland

There was a rise in the number of people aged 21–40 on our permanent register in Northern Ireland. The number of people aged over 55 also increased. There was a small decrease in the number of people aged 41–55.

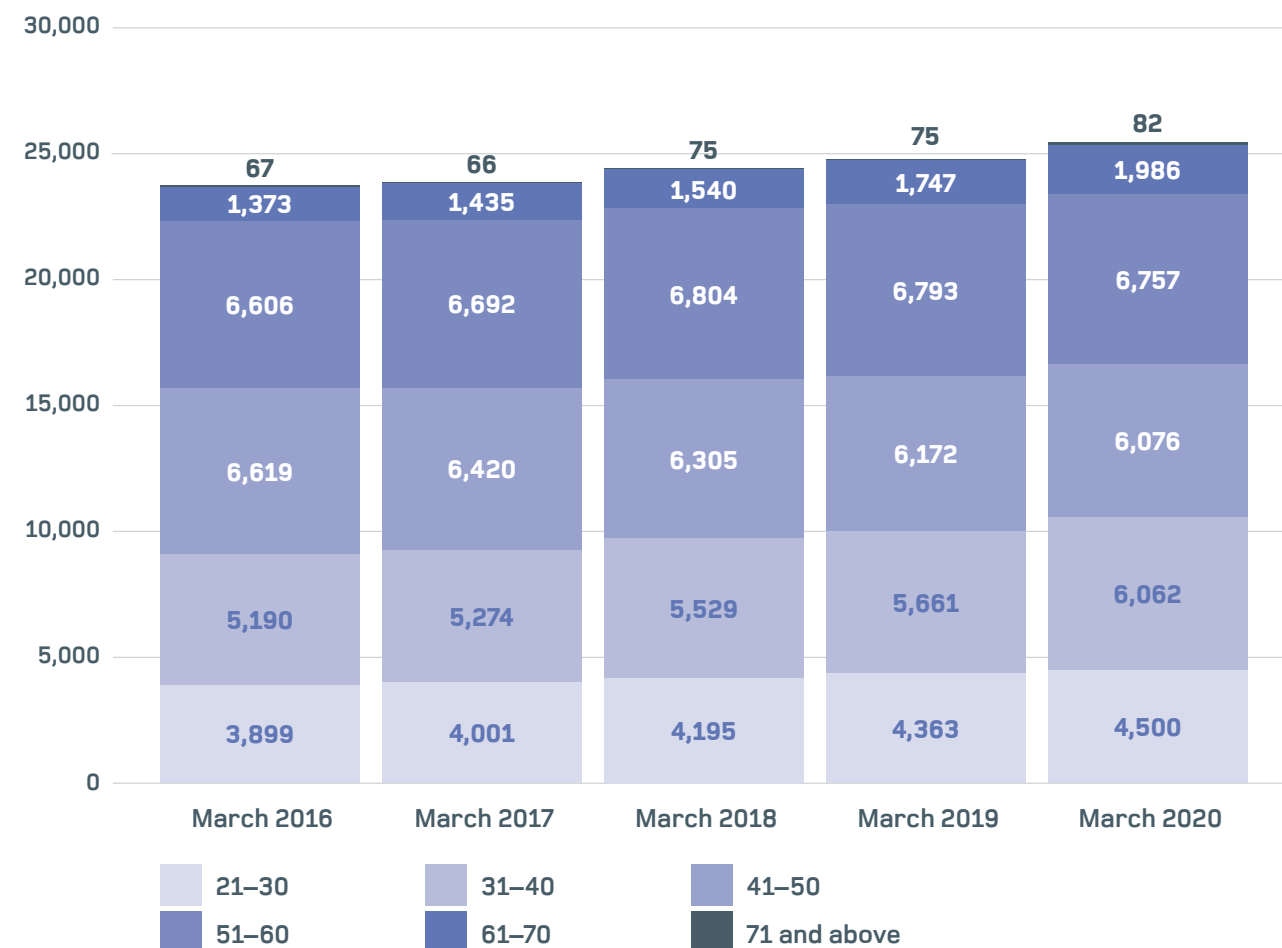
Figure 6a

Age profile of the permanent register in Northern Ireland

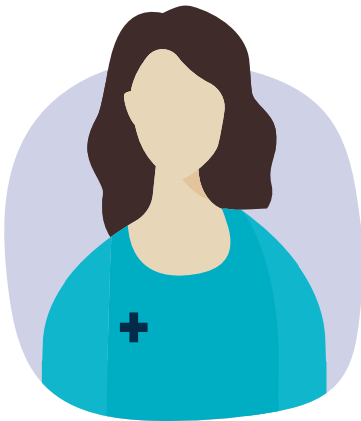
	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
21–30	3,899	4,001	4,195	4,363	4,500
31–40	5,190	5,274	5,529	5,661	6,062
41–50	6,619	6,420	6,305	6,172	6,076
51–55	4,027	3,981	3,920	3,696	3,511
56–60	2,579	2,711	2,884	3,097	3,246
61–70	1,373	1,435	1,540	1,747	1,986
71 and above	67	66	75	75	82

Figure 6b

Age profile of the permanent register

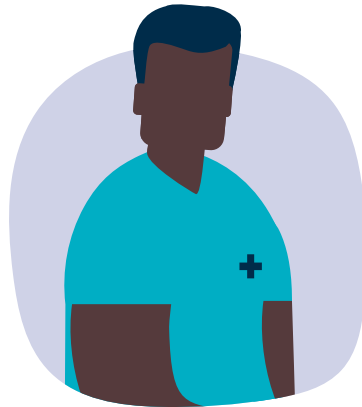


Gender



92.5%

of people on our permanent register in Northern Ireland identify as female



7.5%

of people on our permanent register in Northern Ireland identify as male

This differs slightly from the UK-wide picture of 89 percent who identify as female and 11 percent who identify as male.

Of the 25,463 professionals on the permanent register in Northern Ireland, 98 said their gender is not the same as it was at the time of birth.

Fields of nursing practice

There were slight increases in all four fields of practice in Northern Ireland. The biggest rise was in the number of adult nurses, which grew from 19,075 to 19,623. That's an increase of 548 (2.87 percent). The number of children's nurses also rose by 2.8 percent.

The increases in the number of learning disabilities and mental health nurses were more marginal, at 1.1 percent and 0.99 percent, respectively.

In contrast to the UK as a whole, there were more learning disabilities nurses in March 2020 than there were in 2016.

This data doesn't tell us what role nurses are currently working in. Nurses can hold more than one qualification and don't always work in the fields they are registered in.

Figure 7

Nurses registered in the four fields of practice with an address in Northern Ireland

	Adult	Children	Learning disabilities	Mental health
March 2016	18,355	1,656	798	2,863
March 2017	18,451	1,656	787	2,857
March 2018	18,856	1,710	804	2,882
March 2019	19,075	1,749	817	2,923
March 2020	19,623	1,798	826	2,952

SCPHN and specialist practice qualifications

A nurse or midwife can have multiple additional qualifications. Specialist community and public health nursing (SCPHN) is a distinct part of our register. Someone on our register can become a specialist community public health nurse by taking an approved programme and achieving the right standards.

Where an area of practice is identified on our register, this indicates the area the qualification focused on. 'Specialist practitioner' refers to someone who has a specialist practice qualification (SPQ). SPQs are post-registration qualifications that relate to particular fields of practice. However, gaining an SPQ doesn't change the field a person is registered in.

Figure 8

Total number of registered Specialist Community and Public Health Nurses with an address in Northern Ireland

	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Health visitors	802	824	850	862	912
Occupational health nurses	120	118	118	116	110
School nurses	74	82	88	88	96
SCPHNs without a field of practice	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Family nurses	0	0	0	0	0
Total	997	1,026	1,059	1,068	1,120



Figure 9

Total number of professionals with special/recordable qualifications with an address in Northern Ireland

	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020
Community practitioner nurse prescriber	1,381	1,437	1,499	1,534	1,560
SP – Adult nursing	1,133	1,159	1,181	1,205	1,235
Nurse independent / Supplementary prescriber	622	672	709	809	911
SP – District nursing	710	712	722	737	758
Lecturer / Practice educator	262	240	228	214	211
Teacher	163	174	185	186	184
SP – Mental health	192	189	185	184	180
SP – General practice nursing	136	130	126	119	115
SP – Community children’s nursing	88	87	92	91	94
SP – Community mental health nursing	42	42	43	42	41
SP – Community learning disabilities nursing	34	35	37	38	38
SP – Learning disability nurse	9	9	21	21	21
SP – Children’s nursing	5	5	5	5	5
Nurse independent prescriber	<5	<5	<5	<5	<5
Total	4,779	4,893	5,035	5,187	5,355

SP = Specialist practitioner

Covid-19 temporary register in Northern Ireland

In March 2020 we established a Covid-19 temporary register to support the UK's response to the coronavirus pandemic. We initially invited nurses and midwives who had left our permanent register within the last three years to join our Covid-19 temporary register.

In April we invited two further groups: overseas applicants who had completed all parts of their NMC registration process except their OSCE (Objective structured clinical examination); nurses and midwives who had left the register within the last four and five years.

However the data below is taken from 31 March 2020 – the same as the data from our permanent register above in this report. Therefore it doesn't include these two additional groups. For clarity, data from the Covid-19 temporary register is not included in figures 1–9.

Figure 10

Total people on the Covid-19 temporary register with an address in Northern Ireland

	31 March 2020
Nurse	156
Midwife	6
Nurse and midwife	<5
Total	166

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