

The NMC Register Northern Ireland

1 April 2025 –
31 March 2026



Our unique data give an account of the nursing and midwifery workforce in Northern Ireland – how many people are joining and leaving the professions, where they were educated, their demographic characteristics and more. The data are based on people who have given us an address in Northern Ireland.

The big picture

There are now a record **30,471** professionals on the NMC Register with an address in Northern Ireland. That's **805** more than a year ago (March 2025).

However, as is the case UK-wide, the rate of growth has slowed compared with previous years (**2.7%** in 2025-26 compared to **3.3%** in 2024-25). This is driven by a slowdown in both domestic and international registrations.

A total of **1,304** professionals joined the Register for the first time in the 12 months to March 2026, which is **10.7% fewer** than the previous year.

For the first time in five years, the rate of first-time joiners educated in the UK living in Northern Ireland has decreased, albeit only marginally: **1,093** compared to **1,127** the previous year. Similarly, the number of those educated outside the UK joining for the first time fell by **36.8%** (**211** compared to **334** in March 2025).

Meanwhile, more professionals living in Northern Ireland left the Register compared with the previous year – **1,037** in 2025-26 compared with **952** in 2024-25.

¹ The nursing associate role was introduced in 2019. Nursing associates can currently only practise in this role in England.

30,471
professionals in
Northern Ireland

An increase of
805

+2.7%

As of March 2026,
compared with
March 2025

Nurses
28,746

Midwives
1,379

**Dual
registrants**
344

**Nursing
associates¹**
2

Between 1 April
2025 and 31 March
2026, compared
to the same period
2024-25

1,304
joined the
Register

1,037
left the
Register

The increasing diversity of the Register

Professionals from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds now make up **15.9%** of the total Register in Northern Ireland (**4,482**). That's **1.5 percentage points higher** than last year and **7 percentage points more** than five years ago.

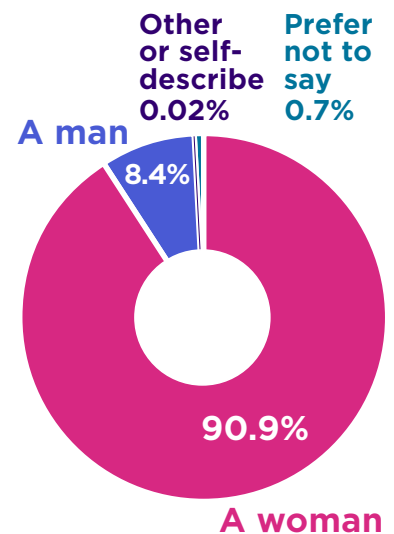
That's despite a decrease in the number of professionals who were educated outside the UK joining the Register living in Northern Ireland.

While the nursing and midwifery professions are increasingly diverse, nurses, midwives and nursing associates are experiencing unacceptable racism and discrimination while delivering care. **Spotlight**, the NMC's 2025 annual insight report, reported that **40%** of the professionals who responded to our annual survey said they had experienced discrimination in the previous year, most often on grounds of ethnicity or age. This is devastating for those individuals and it affects care experience and quality.

It's incumbent upon everyone working in health and care to confront racism and discrimination.

We published **principles to support anti-racism in midwifery and nursing education and practice** because our professions have a right to learn and work in environments that support equity and fairness. They are intended to drive real change ahead of our consultation on revisions to the Code which will include proposals to strengthen the expectation that registrants recognise, challenge and disrupt racism.

Gender split of professionals living in Northern Ireland (% of the Register)



As of March 2026

269 people have declared a disability²



² There has been a decrease in the number of professionals in Northern Ireland declaring a disability. This is likely to reflect changes in how disability data is captured, rather than a reduction in disability across the workforce.

International joiners

Our data on internationally educated professionals in our four nation reports, can never be definitive. This is because professionals may not yet have a registered UK address at the point of registration. This means there may be international professionals working in Northern Ireland who aren't included in this data because they have yet to provide us with their UK address.

We encourage all international joiners to our Register to update their details through [MyNMC](#) at the earliest opportunity.

From the latest data, we know that at least **211** internationally educated professionals in Northern Ireland joined the Register. This is a decrease of **36.8%** compared with the previous year and marks the first reduction in growth for five years.

Over the same period, **100** internationally educated professionals left the Register, an increase of **14.9%** compared with the previous year.

India remains the top country for new internationally educated joiners with **127** new joiners in 2025-26. The Philippines and Zimbabwe are second and third highest – which is consistent with previous years.

We continue to see proportional rises in first time joiners in Northern Ireland from 'red list' countries, including Zimbabwe. Active recruitment from these countries is prohibited by the relevant [codes of practice](#) which uphold ethical standards on recruitment and support global health equity. Nurses, midwives and nursing associates are nevertheless free to make their own decisions about where to practise. We appreciate the contribution of all internationally educated registrants.

Fields of practice

Adult nursing has grown at a faster rate (**2.7%**) in Northern Ireland than the UK overall. Learning disabilities nursing is the only field of practice to have decreased, in keeping with the UK-wide picture, however this is only marginal (**-0.1%**).

Countries from which we receive the highest numbers of internationally educated new joiners (% change since 2024-25)

-  **India**
127 ↓ -29.1%
-  **Philippines**
24 ↓ -52%
-  **Zimbabwe**
15 ↑ +15.4%

Fields of practice, change in the last 12 months

-  **Adult nurses**
+2.7%
23,511
-  **Children's nurses**
+2.1%
2,163
-  **Mental health nurses**
+1.7%
3,297
-  **Learning disabilities nurses**
-0.1%
874
-  **Specialist community public health nurses**
-0.6%
1,278

Why are people leaving the Register in Northern Ireland?

Since 2017 we've run an annual survey of professionals who left our Register.

Responses to [this year's survey](#) show that retirement remains the top reason for those leaving in Northern Ireland, followed by physical or mental health. Most leavers in Northern Ireland were unlikely to recommend their profession, although they were more positive than those in the other countries of the UK, which is consistent with previous years.

Sharing our insights to support the sector

We hope that this overview of our Register in Northern Ireland, alongside our comprehensive [data tables](#) and leavers' survey summary can be used by partners and the wider sector in their workforce planning. If you have questions about our insight or ideas for how we might improve the usefulness of this report, please get in touch via research@nmc-uk.org.



Emma Westcott
Executive Director
Strategy and Insight

Length of time since initial registration, change in the last 12 months³



³ Length of time since first registration does not necessarily mean unbroken or continuous registration. Many registrants leave the Register for a variety of reasons, for one or more periods during their careers.

We shouldn't forget that behind our data are dedicated professionals who provide safe and effective care to people every day. We're grateful for everything they do for the people and communities they serve.



Who we are and what we do

Our vision is for safe and effective nursing and midwifery practice across the four countries of the UK – regulated and supported by the NMC – a fit for the future organisation, with fairness and equity at the heart of everything we do.

Our role is to **protect the public and maintain confidence** in the nursing and midwifery professions. As the largest independent regulator in Europe of more than **867,000** nursing and midwifery professionals, we have a crucial role in making this a reality.

We do this by **setting and promoting high education and professional standards** for all future and registered nurses and midwives in the UK and nursing associates in England.

We also ensure every nurse, midwife and nursing associate on our Register meets **clear standards of conduct** and practice which protects the public and the reputation of our professions.

We have a duty to **investigate concerns** and to take steps to **protect the public** in the relatively rare instances where we need to limit or restrict a nurse, midwife or nursing associate's right to practise.

We are building a new NMC with integrity, fairness, respect, equity and effectiveness at its core.

We are determined to **improve and modernise our culture and ways of working**. This will ensure that the public and professionals feel confident in our work.

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 The Nursing and Midwifery Council

The nursing and midwifery regulator for England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland
Registered charity in England and Wales (1091434) and in Scotland (SC038362).

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