

The NMC Register Scotland

1 April 2025 –
31 March 2026



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

The big picture

As of 31 March 2026, there are a record **77,471** professionals on the NMC Register with an address in Scotland. That's **1,244** more than a year ago (March 2025).

However, consistent with the picture for the Register across the UK, the rate of growth has slowed compared with previous years (**1.6%** in 2025-26 compared with **2.3%** in 2024-25).

A total of **3,462** professionals living in Scotland joined the Register for the first time in the 12 months to March 2026. This is a decrease compared with the previous year (**3,916** joiners).

Over the same period, **2,896** professionals left the Register. This is a slight increase compared with the previous year (**2,853** leavers).

More professionals joined the Register than left during the year, meaning the Register continues to grow overall. However, fewer joiners and slightly more leavers mean the gap between those joining and leaving has reduced compared with previous years.

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

77,471

professionals
in Scotland



An increase of

1,244

+1.6%

As of March 2026,
compared with
March 2025



+1.6%

Nurses

73,233



+3.2%

Midwives

3,939



-7.9%

**Dual
registrants**

293



0%

**Nursing
associates¹**

6

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



-11.6%

3,462

joined the
Register



+1.5%

2,896

left the
Register

The increasing diversity of the Register

Professionals from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds now make up **9.1% (7,038)** of the total Register in Scotland. That's **1.1 percentage points higher** than last year (**8%**) and reflects continued growth in the diversity of the Register.

That's despite a decline in the number of professionals who were educated outside the UK joining the Register.

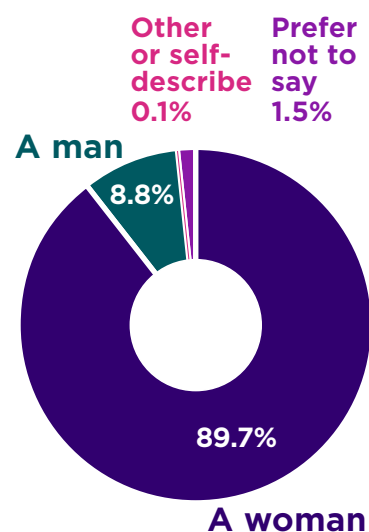
While the nursing and midwifery professions are increasingly diverse, nurses, midwives and nursing associates are experiencing unacceptable racism and discrimination while delivering care. **Spotlight**, the NMC's 2025 annual insight report, reported that **40%** of the professionals who responded to 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 Scotland (% of the Register)



As of March 2026

943 people have declared a disability²

² There has been a decrease in the number of professionals in Scotland declaring a disability, alongside an increase in those selecting 'prefer not to say'. This is likely to reflect changes in how disability data is captured.

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 Scotland 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.

Our latest data show that at least **342** internationally educated professionals joined the Register in Scotland in the last year. This is a decrease of **36.5%** compared with the previous year.

Over the same period, **128** internationally educated professionals left the Register, an increase of **26.7%** compared with the previous year.

While the number of internationally educated professionals on the Register has continued to grow overall, the number joining in the last year has decreased compared with previous years.

Last year India, Nigeria and the Philippines were the top three countries of training for internationally educated new joiners. India remains the largest source of international joiners in Scotland. However, in the 12 months to March 2026, Ghana replaced the Philippines as the third-highest country.

This means that two of the biggest sources of international joiners – Nigeria and Ghana – are 'red list' countries. Active recruitment from these countries is prohibited by Scotland's [code of practice](#) which upholds ethical standards on recruitment and supports 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

All fields of practice have seen modest growth in Scotland. This includes learning disabilities nursing, which has grown slightly in Scotland (**+0.5%**) but has fallen across the UK (**-0.4%**).

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

- 1 India**
73 ↓ -38.1%
- 2 Nigeria**
60 ↓ -38.8%
- 3 Ghana**
59 ↓ -31.4%

Fields of practice, change in the last 12 months

- Adult nurses**
56,771
+1.5%
- Children's nurses**
4,929
+2.1%
- Mental health nurses**
11,318
+1.3%
- Learning disabilities nurses**
1,866
+0.5%
- Specialist community public health nurses**
3,331
-1.6%

Why are people leaving the Register in Scotland?

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

Responses to [this year's survey](#) show the top reason for those leaving in Scotland was retirement, followed by physical or mental health and that most leavers in Scotland were unlikely to recommend their profession. This is consistent with the UK-wide picture and with what respondents told us in previous years.

Sharing our insights to support the sector

We hope that this overview of our Register in Scotland, 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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