

# The NMC Register

1 April 2025 –  
31 March 2026



Data from the NMC Register provide a comprehensive view of the nursing and midwifery workforce in the UK.

The accompanying [leavers' survey](#) adds important insight into why people have left the Register.

## The big picture

The number of nurses, midwives and nursing associates<sup>1</sup> on the NMC Register has reached a record high of **867,935**. That's **14,228 more** than the same time last year and represents around 2.5% of the UK working population<sup>2</sup>.

This growth shows more people are joining the Register (**41,542**) than leaving (**30,323**).

However, **the rate of growth of the Register has almost halved** – between April 2025 and March 2026 the Register grew by just **1.7%** compared to **3.3%** between April 2024 and March 2025.

This is mainly due to fewer internationally educated professionals joining the Register. In 2025-26, **26.4%** of new joiners to the Register were internationally educated, compared to **39.1%** the year before and a high of **49.4%** in 2023-24.

The number of UK-educated professionals joining the Register also fell by **4.9%** compared to the same time last year, contributing to the slower growth.

We will closely monitor this data point to see if it is the first sign of a new and concerning trend.

A record

**867,935**

registered  
professionals

An increase of

**14,228**

+1.7%



As of March 2026  
compared to  
March 2025



+1.4%

**Nurses**

799,001



+4.2%

**Midwives**

48,545



-1.5%

**Dual  
registrants**

6,151



+11.4%

**Nursing  
associates**

14,238

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

<sup>2</sup> Based on [Office for National Statistics labour market data](#) for January 2026 to March 2026 (released on 18 June 2026).

## A Register that is more diverse than ever

For the first time, **more than a third** of registered professionals are from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds (**33.8%** on 31 March 2026 compared to **32.5%** on 31 March 2025).

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

This is partly because UK-educated new joiners are gradually becoming more ethnically diverse – the number of joiners from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds in March 2026 is **35%**, an increase of **12.7 percentage points** since the 12 months up to March 2021 (**22.3%**).

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.

Register as of March 2026:

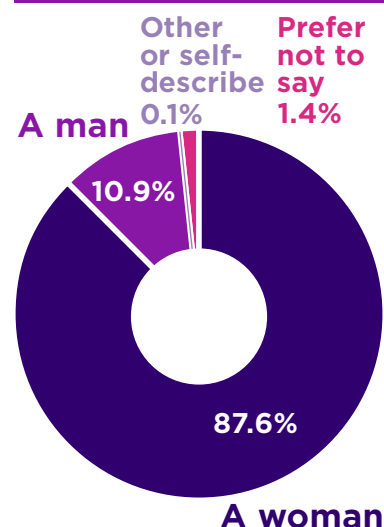
75.6%

UK educated

24.4%

internationally educated

Gender split of the Register



## A closer look at the slowdown of growth

Over the past year, **10,961** professionals who were educated outside the UK joined the NMC Register for the first time. That's **9,708 (47%) fewer** than the previous year (**20,669** in March 2025).

In the same period, **30,581** UK-educated professionals joined the Register – this is **4.9% fewer** than the **32,164** who joined the previous year. This fall follows the slowdown seen in 2024-25 where the number of UK-educated new joiners increased by only **5.9%**, compared to **11.9%** during 2023-24.

At the same time, the total number of leavers increased, but remains roughly consistent as a proportion of the Register (**3.6%**). **25,094** of those who left were UK-educated – that's **6.7%** more than in March 2025 (**23,513**) and **5,229** were internationally educated – **0.9%** fewer than in March 2025 (**5,276**).

This means that the overall gap between the number of people joining and leaving the Register has narrowed, however the number of professionals on the Register has still increased.

## International joiner patterns are shifting

India remains the largest source of international joiners, with **4,215** joiners in 2025-26 but this is a **54.4%** fall compared to the previous year (**9,249**). Nigeria is the second largest source, with 1,614 joiners – a fall of **31.7%** (**2,363**).

For the first time since 2015-16, the Philippines was not one of the top three sources of international joiners – Ghana is now the third largest international source, with **1,391** joiners in 2025-26, a **22.0%** decrease compared to the previous year (**1,783**).

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 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.

In the 12 months compared to the same period in 2024-25

 **41,542**  
-21.4% joined the Register

 **30,323**  
+5.3% left the Register

Total number of professionals as of 31 March 2026

 **655,826**  
+1.3% UK-educated

 **212,109**  
+3.0% internationally educated

Countries from which we receive the highest numbers of internationally educated new joiners (% of joiners)

**1**  **India**  
4,215 (19.8%)

**2**  **Nigeria**  
1,614 (7.6%)

**3**  **Ghana**  
1,391 (6.5%)

## Differing rates of growth by profession

Growth in the number of **midwives** on the Register is stronger than overall growth of the Register at **4.2%**, albeit down from **5.6%** in the previous year. The slower growth is driven by a **10.8%** decline in new midwife joiners (**3,304** in 2026 compared to **3,704** in 2025).

The number of registered **nurses** rose by **just 1.4%** over the past year, and there were also fewer new nurse joiners in the year to March 2026 than during the previous year (**34,562** against **45,597**).

In the same period, the number of new nursing associate joiners, who have been able to practise in England since 2019, has **increased** (**3,674** in 2026 vs **3,532** in 2025). There are now **14,238 nursing associates** on the Register, compared to **12,782** in March 2025.

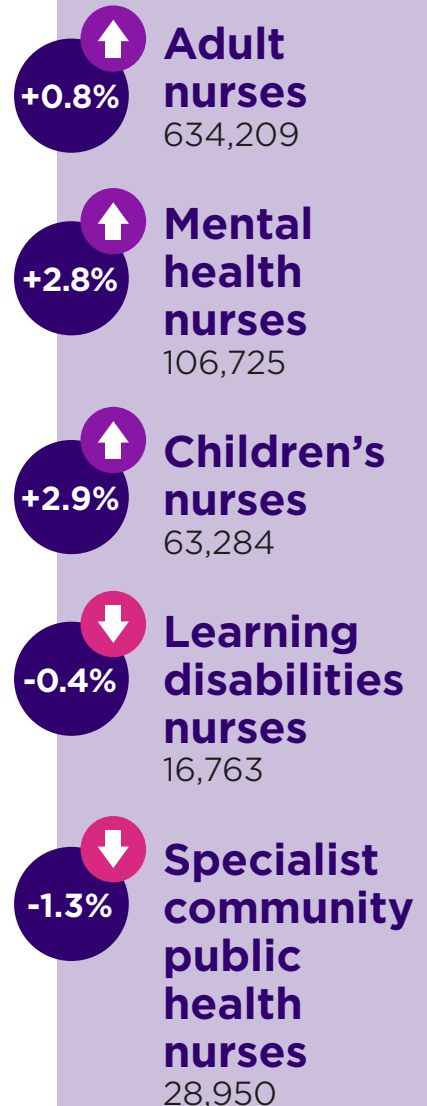
The mental health and children's nursing fields of practice are growing at a faster rate than the Register as a whole, but adult nursing is growing more slowly. Most internationally educated nurses join as adult nurses so the drop off in international joiners may be having an impact. In the 12 months to March 2025, there had been a small uplift in the number of learning disabilities nurses (**+0.9%**) but in the same period this year the number decreased (**-0.4%**).

## Why people are leaving the Register

A total of **30,323** people left the NMC Register in the year to March 2026 – a **5.3%** increase compared to the previous year (**28,789**).

Responses to our latest annual **leavers' survey** show the top three reasons for leaving have been consistent over time (retirement, physical or mental health and burnout or exhaustion) and each year the proportion leaving for retirement has increased by 2-3%.

As of March 2026,  
compared to the  
same period last year



In the 12 months  
to March 2026

**5,229**  
leavers were  
internationally  
educated



**25,094**  
leavers were  
educated in  
the UK



## Sharing insights to support the sector

Together, these findings show a workforce that is larger and more diverse than ever, but one where growth is slowing and future supply cannot be taken for granted.

We hope this overview, alongside our comprehensive [data tables](#), will support workforce policy, planning and research in the UK, ensuring the most effective delivery of services that people and communities across the country rely on for their health and wellbeing.

If you have questions about our data or ideas for how we might improve the usefulness of this report, please get in touch via [research@nmc-uk.org](mailto:research@nmc-uk.org).



**Emma Westcott**  
Executive Director  
Strategy and Insight

Length of time since  
initial registration  
– all professions  
(change in the last  
12 months)<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> 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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