

About us

Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the professional regulator of almost 732,000 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. Second, we maintain the register of professionals eligible to practise. Third, we investigate concerns about nurses, midwives and nursing associates – something that affects less than one percent of professionals each year. We believe in giving professionals the chance to address concerns, but we'll always take action when needed.

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 November 2020.

How to interpret our data

Not everyone on our permanent register will currently be working as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate, 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 England.

All of the people who joined our register in 2020–2021 joined through different processes, depending on whether they were from the UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or outside the EEA. Now that the UK has left the EU, everyone joining our register from outside the UK follows the same international process. However, no applications from people in the EEA that were received from 1 January 2021 were completed by 31 March 2021.

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 2021.

We continually review the quality and content of our data and information.

When improved data or additional information become available, we retrospectively update our previously published information. This means that when comparing data in our latest reports against some of our previous publications, you may see small differences in some data.

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.

Size of our permanent register on 31 March 2021

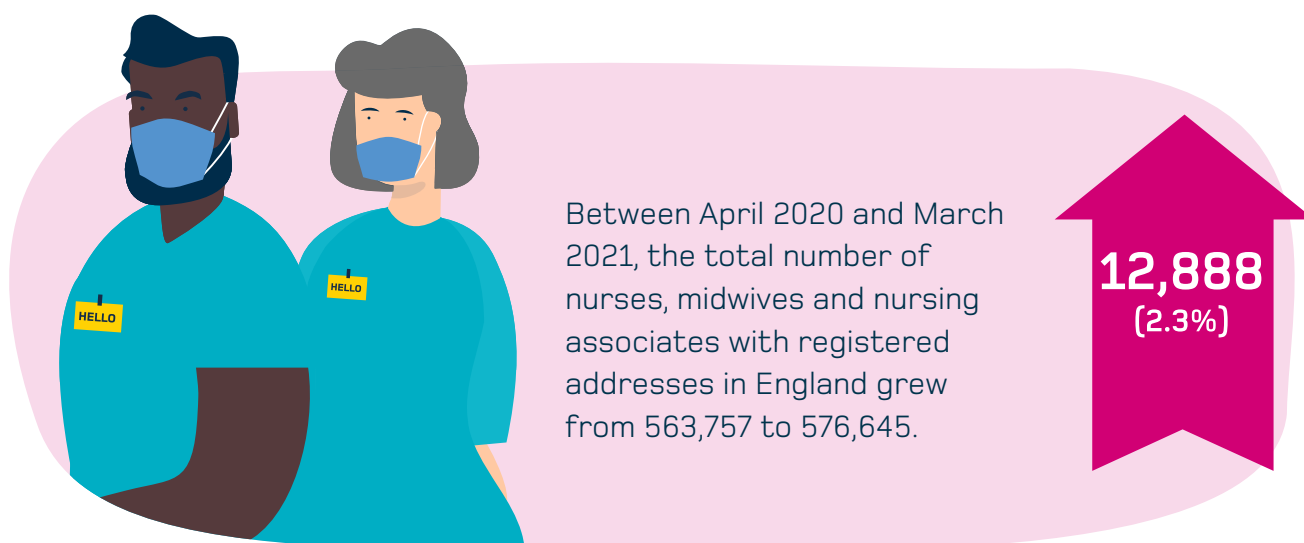


Table 1
Total number of people on the permanent register by registration type with an address in England

Registration type	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Nurse	511,437	510,179	514,750	525,073	534,486
Midwife	28,235	29,338	30,329	31,224	32,183
Dual registrant (nurse and midwife)	6,956	6,298	5,881	5,784	5,640
Nursing associate	n/a	n/a	478	1,676	4,336
Total	546,628	545,815	551,438	563,757	576,645

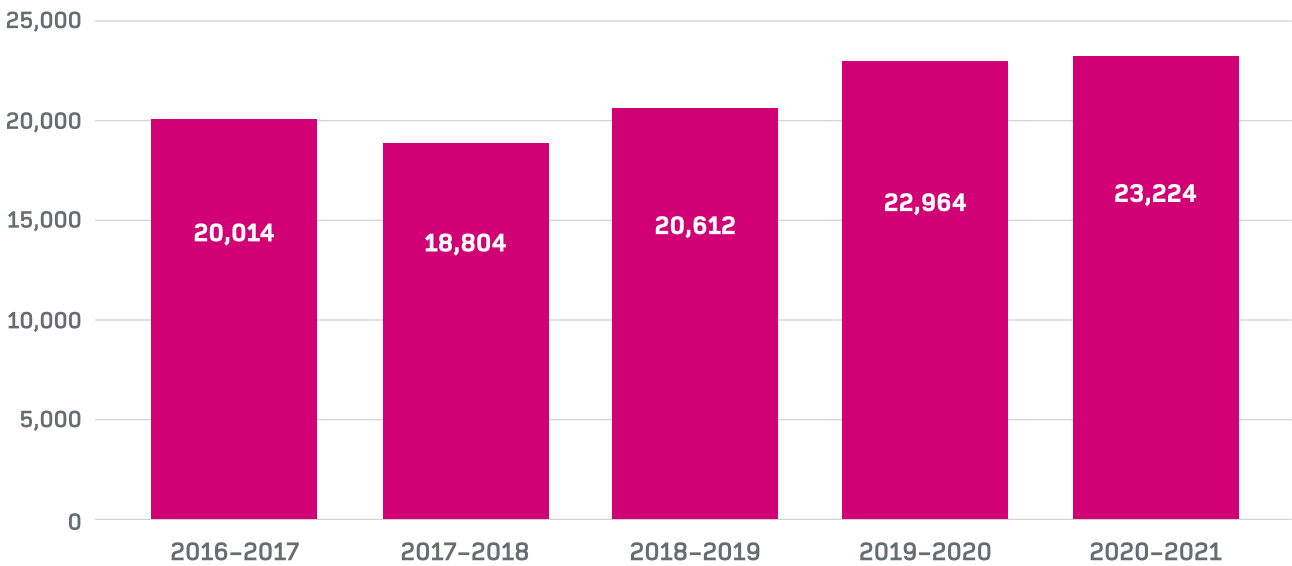
The nursing associate role was introduced in 2019, in England only. Nursing associates bridge the gap between health and care assistants, and registered nurses.

Joining the permanent register

The number of people joining our permanent register in England for the first time increased by 1.1 percent (260 people). In total 23,224 people joined. This is slower growth in the number of joiners compared to the 11.4 percent increase in 2019–2020, or the 9.6 percent rise in 2018–2019.

Figure 1

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



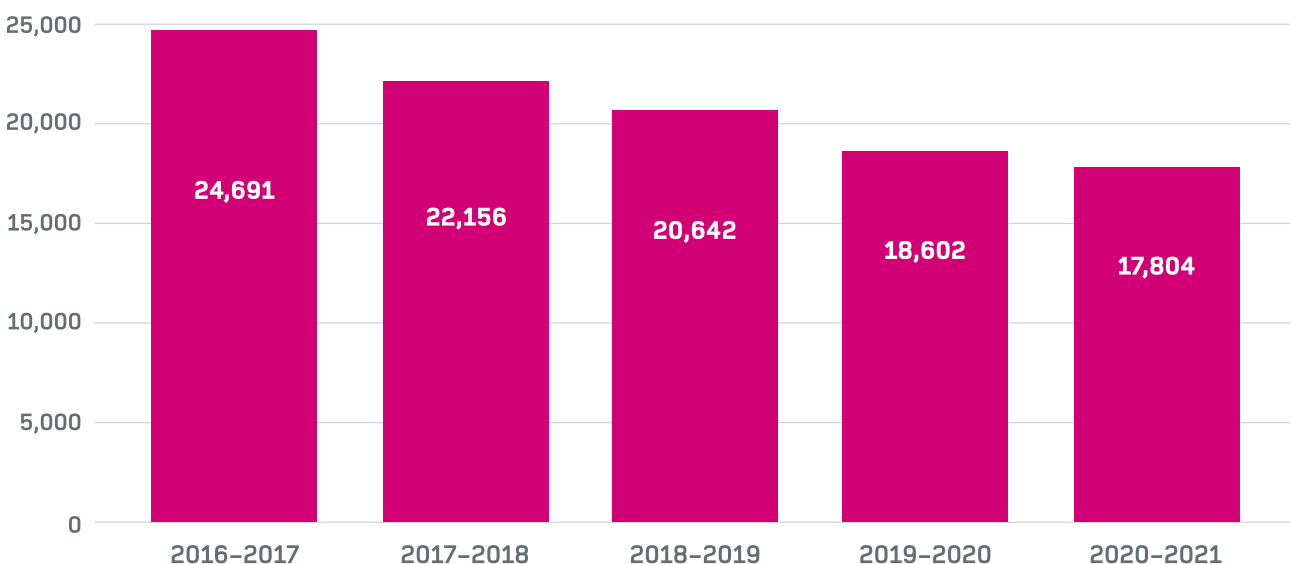
Joiners' data doesn't include those re-joining the register having previously left. Also, the overall number on the register is from one point in time, whereas the joiners' and leavers' data are the sum of activity over twelve months. Therefore, these figures won't add up exactly.

Leaving the permanent register

The number of people leaving the permanent register in England has decreased over recent years. This is similar to the UK-wide picture. In 2020–2021, 17,804 people in England left our permanent register. That's 798 (4.3 percent) fewer than the previous year.

Figure 2

People with an address in England leaving the permanent register



Professionals who trained in the European Economic Area (EEA)

The number of people on the permanent register in England who trained in the EEA has decreased. The most significant dip can be seen in the number of professionals who trained in Spain, which fell by 11.4 percent. Romania remains the most frequent EEA country of training, with a marginal increase of 0.9 percent to a total of 6,499 professionals.

Table 2

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

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Romania	6,368	6,396	6,416	6,443	6,499
Portugal	4,052	3,994	3,961	3,921	3,830
Italy	3,476	3,384	3,351	3,323	3,185
Spain	4,811	4,417	3,916	3,397	3,009
Poland	2,447	2,398	2,357	2,296	2,253
Total EEA	26,956	26,331	25,650	24,964	24,293

Professionals who trained outside the European Economic Area (EEA)

The number of people on the permanent register in England who trained outside the EEA continues to grow. The Philippines remains the most frequent non-EEA country of training with 28,521 registered professionals, which is an 11.5 percent increase compared to the previous year. The number of professionals trained in India increased by 14.6 percent to 19,912.

Table 3

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

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Philippines	21,181	22,005	23,249	25,584	28,521
India	14,653	14,855	15,338	17,369	19,912
Nigeria	2,670	2,678	2,771	3,205	3,725
South Africa	2,804	2,710	2,667	2,643	2,586
Zimbabwe	2,101	2,100	2,143	2,232	2,413
Total outside EEA	53,109	53,963	55,947	61,500	68,586

This data is based on people on our permanent register with a registered address in England. 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 England

Age

The combined number of people aged 56 and above increased by 6 percent. The combined number of those aged 21–40 rose by 3.9 percent. There was a marginal rise in people aged 41–50, and a fall of 2.7 percent aged 51–55.

Table 4

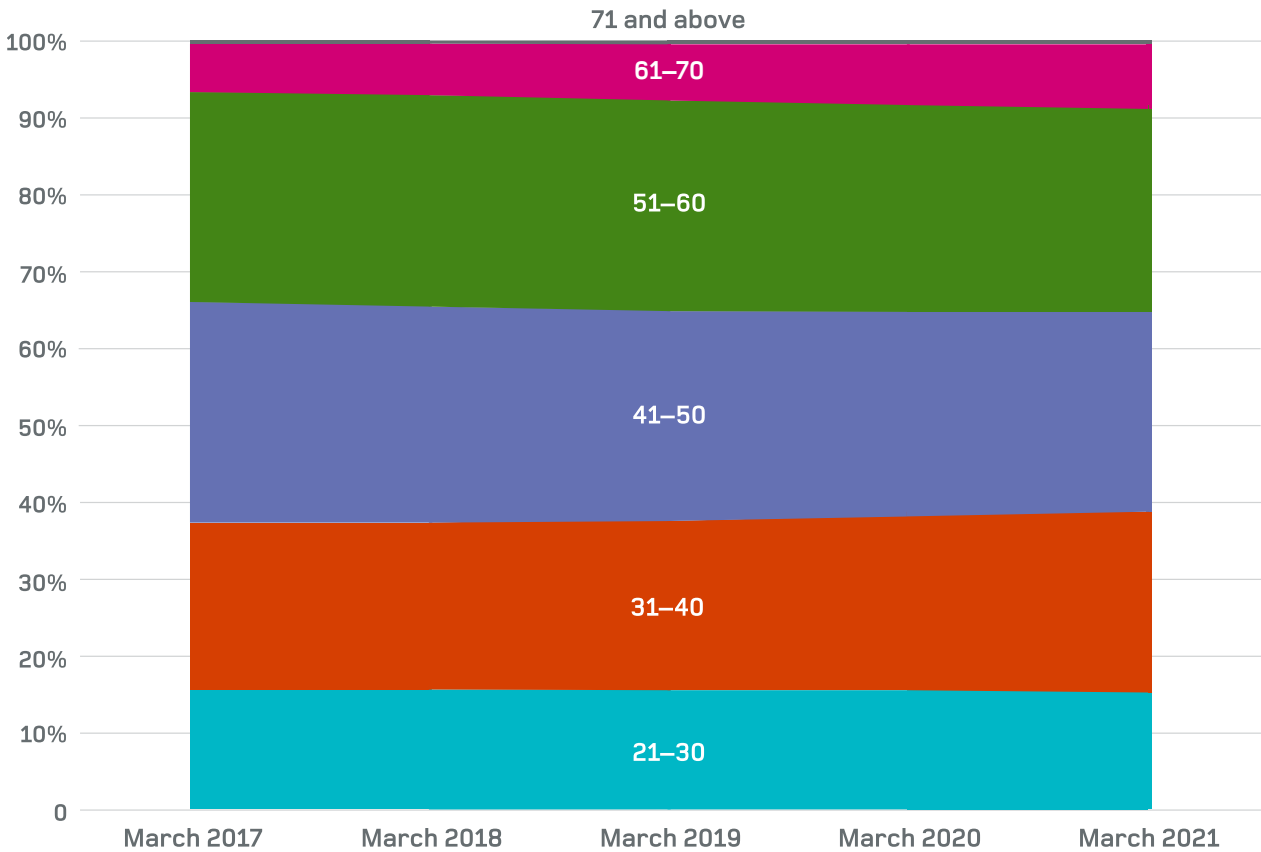
Age profile of the permanent register in England

	March 2017		March 2018		March 2019		March 2020		March 2021	
Below 21	1	n/a	1	n/a	1	n/a	1	n/a	7	+600%
21–30	85,109	+3.2%	85,299	+0.2%	85,525	+0.3%	87,564	+2.4%	88,008	+0.5%
31–40	118,474	-0.6%	118,281	+0.2%	121,493	+2.7%	127,610	+5%	135,384	+6.1%
41–50	156,866	-2.7%	153,165	-2.4%	150,734	-1.6%	149,682	-0.7%	149,694	+0.01%
51–55	87,380	-0.2%	86,141	-1.4%	84,445	-2%	82,695	-2.1%	80,467	-2.7%
56–60	62,104	+2.6%	63,968	+3%	66,743	+4.3%	68,997	+3.4%	71,550	+3.7%
61–70	34,563	+1.1%	36,699	+6.2%	40,034	+9.1%	44,459	+11.1%	48,606	+9.3%
71 and above	2,131	-5.9%	2,261	+6.1%	2,463	+8.9%	2,749	+11.6%	2,929	+6.5%

The percentage changes shown are from year to year within each age group.



Figure 3
Age profile of the permanent register in England



Gender



89%

of people on our permanent register in England identify as female



11%

of people on our permanent register in England identify as male

Over the last five years there have been only fractional changes in this gender split, within a one percent swing.

Of the 576,645 professionals on the permanent register in England, 4,125 said their gender is not the same as it was at the time of birth.

Ethnicity

Table 5

Ethnicity profile of the permanent register in England

	Nurses, midwives and nursing associates
Arab	215
Asian – Any other Asian background	6,917
Asian – Bangladeshi	1,218
Asian – Chinese	1,734
Asian – Filipina/Filipino	26,567
Asian – Indian	23,509
Asian – Pakistani	4,078
Black – African	50,992
Black – Any other black background	1,368
Black – Caribbean	10,524
Mixed – Any other mixed /multiple ethnic background	1,019
Mixed – White and Asian	2,054
Mixed – White and black African	1,610
Mixed – White and black Caribbean	4,506
Other – Any other ethnic group	5,966
Prefer not to say	14,362
Unknown	5,320
White – Any other white background	28,199
White – English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	378,114
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	92
White – Irish	8,281
Total	576,645

Fields of nursing practice

The number of adult and children’s nurses on the permanent register in England grew by 1.5 percent and 2.5 percent, respectively.

The number of mental health nurses grew by 1.2 percent. There was a marginal decrease in the number of learning disabilities nurses.

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.

Table 6
Nurses registered in the four fields of practice in England

	Adult		Children		Learning disabilities		Mental health	
March 2017	417,370	-0.6%	40,244	+1.4%	13,866	-4%	69,532	-1.5%
March 2018	413,973	-0.8%	41,092	+2.1%	13,520	-2.5%	69,005	-0.8%
March 2019	415,455	+0.4%	42,160	+2.6%	13,465	-0.4%	69,483	+0.7%
March 2020	422,458	+1.7%	43,225	+2.5%	13,480	+0.1%	70,575	+1.6%
March 2021	428,966	+1.5%	44,291	+2.5%	13,381	-0.7%	71,385	+1.2%

The percentage changes shown are from year to year within each field of practice.



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.

Table 7

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

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Health visitors	19,077	18,614	18,158	17,885	17,819
School nurses	3,363	3,388	3,411	3,438	3,541
Occupational health nurses	2,710	2,645	2,616	2,570	2,516
SCPHN – RPHN	176	175	174	167	166
Family nurses	0	0	0	0	0
Total	25,326	24,822	24,359	24,060	24,042

RPHN = Registered Public Health Nurse

Table 8**Total number of special/recordable qualifications issued to professionals on the permanent register with an address in England, sorted from high to low**

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Nurse independent / Supplementary prescriber	30,853	33,305	36,308	39,755	41,878
Community practitioner nurse prescriber	32,849	32,709	32,839	32,949	33,169
SP – District nursing	12,539	12,181	12,074	11,917	11,832
Teacher	3,381	3,656	3,926	4,079	4,110
Lecturer / Practice educator	4,082	3,687	3,363	3,099	2,865
SP – Adult nursing	2,189	2,105	2,055	2,008	1,952
SP – General practice nursing	1,311	1,285	1,266	1,239	1,218
Nurse independent prescriber	1,243	1,187	1,113	1,045	990
SP – Community mental health nursing	995	949	900	854	814
SP – Community children's nursing	619	625	627	633	628
SP – Mental health	498	478	459	442	430
SP – Children's nursing	335	322	309	303	294
SP – Community learning disabilities nursing	357	334	316	303	294
SP – Learning disability nurse	49	50	49	48	47
Total	91,300	92,873	95,604	98,674	100,521

SP = Specialist practitioner

Covid-19 temporary register in England

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 2020 we invited two further groups: overseas applicants, including nurses and midwives, who had completed all parts of their NMC registration process except their OSCE (objective structured clinical examination); nurses and midwives who had left the permanent register within the last four and five years.

In January 2021 we extended our invitation to a further group of overseas-trained nurses in the final stages of their application to join our permanent register. Since then we've also opened the Covid-19 temporary register up to those who left our permanent register more recently (currently before 30 April 2021).

Table 9

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

31 March 2021	
Nurse	11,451
Midwife	778
Nurse and midwife	153
Total	12,382

The number of people with an address in England make up 80.1 percent of the Covid-19 temporary register.

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