

# The NMC register

1 April 2024 –  
31 March 2025



Data from the NMC register provide the definitive account of the total available nursing and midwifery workforce in the UK.

The accompanying **leavers' survey** gives valuable insight into the reasons why people have left our professions.

## The big picture

The NMC register of nurses, midwives and nursing associates who can practise in the UK has reached a record high of **853,707** – representing **two percent** of the entire working age population.

However, the register's growth has decelerated – between April 2024 and March 2025, the register grew by **just 3.3 percent**, compared to **4.8 percent** during the same period the year before (April 2023 – March 2024).

This is due mainly to a significant slowdown in international recruitment, which had surged over previous years. In 2024–2025, international professionals accounted for **39.1 percent** of new joiners to the register. In the previous three years, they had accounted for **between 48.0 and 49.4 percent** of joiners.

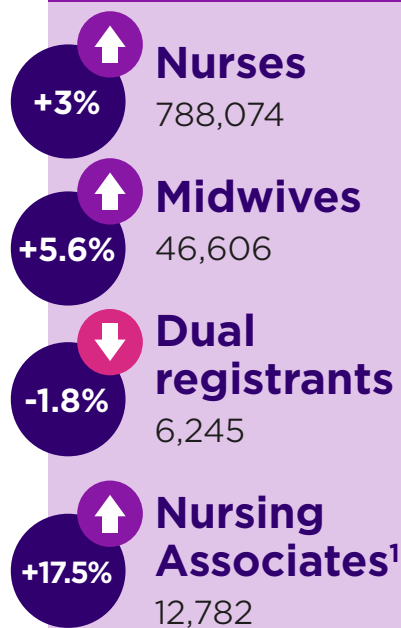
We continue to see **more than one in 10 people** who leave the register citing their physical and mental health as the main reason – with most of those saying their professional role had worsened their health. Worryingly, **fewer than a fifth** of leavers would recommend the professions to others.

<sup>1</sup> The nursing associate role was introduced in 2019. Nursing associates can only practise in this role in England. The Welsh Government has committed to introducing nursing associates in Wales subject to changes in our legislation.

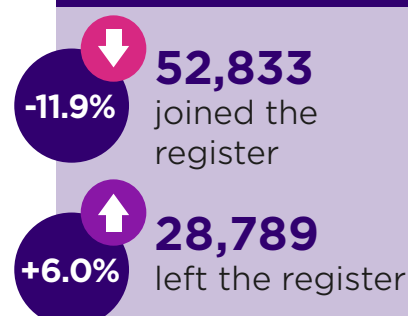
A record high of  
**853,707**  
registered  
professionals

An increase of  
**27,289** **+3.3%**

As of March 2025  
compared to  
March 2024



In the last 12 months  
compared to the  
same period in  
2023-2024



## A closer look at the slowdown in international recruitment

Over the past year, **20,671 professionals** who were educated outside the UK joined the NMC register for the first time. That's **8,957 (30.2 percent) fewer** than the previous year (**29,628** in the 12 months to March 2024).

This slowdown was spread across nations, including the top three sources of international recruitment in recent years: India, the Philippines and Nigeria. The number of joiners who were educated in these three countries fell by **36.7 percent**, **47.6 percent** and **25.5 percent** respectively, over the past year.

Additionally, a total of **5,276** international professionals left the register during this period – **33.3 percent (1,317) more** than the previous year (**3,959**). That said, it is important to consider leavers data in the context of a growing register – **2.7 percent** of the international cohort left the register over the last year, which is a marginal rise compared to **2.4 percent** the year before. Factors may include changes for professionals on the Health and Care Worker visa.

There has also been greater emphasis on domestic recruitment in England under the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan.

Additionally, analysis of our data by the Health Foundation found a significant rise in international professionals on the NMC register seeking to move to other countries, drawn mainly by the prospect of better earnings potential.

In the last 12 months

**39.1%**

of new joiners were educated outside the UK



Register as of March 2025:

**75.9%**

UK educated



**24.1%**

internationally educated



New joiners from non-UK countries of education in the last 12 months, and change from same period in 2023-2024

**1**



**India**

9,249 ↓ -36.7%

**2**



**Philippines**

2,323 ↓ -47.6%

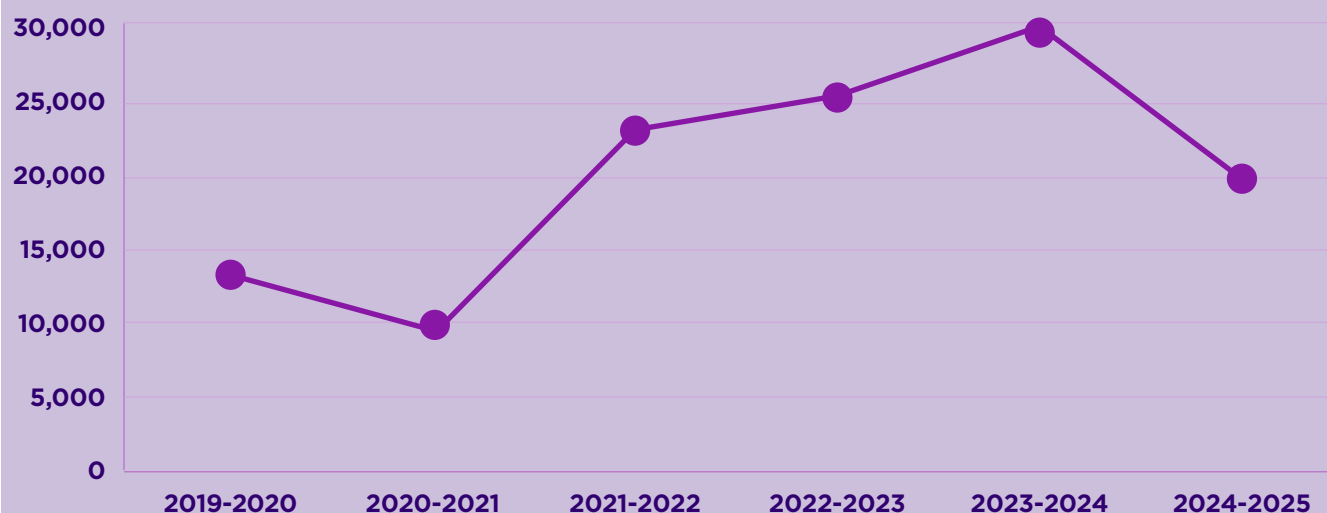
**3**



**Nigeria**

2,363 ↓ -25.5%

### Professionals educated internationally joining the register for the first time



## Domestic recruitment not enough to offset international slowdown

The number of UK-educated professionals joining our register for the first time has continued to grow but at a slower rate and not by enough to offset the fall in international recruitment – hence the overall register has grown more slowly over the past year.

A total of **32,163** UK professionals joined our register in the 12 months to March 2025, which is **5.9 percent more** than in the previous year (**30,363**). However, in 2023–2024, the number of UK joiners grew by **11.9 percent**.

The latest figures equate to **an extra 1,800** UK joiners over the past year, compared to **8,959 fewer** international joiners.

The number of UK leavers rose by **1.3 percent** to **23,513** but remains unchanged as a proportion of the growing UK cohort on the register, at **3.7 percent**.

There are now **647,690** UK-educated professionals on the register – an increase of **11,489** or **1.8 percent** since 31 March 2024 (**636,201**).

## Reasons for leaving

A total of **28,789** people left the NMC register in the year to March 2025. That means **3.5 percent** of the register left, compared to **3.4 percent** the previous year.

Retirement is always the top reason why people leave our register, according to respondents to our annual leavers' survey.

Concerningly, the second-most common reason last year was people's physical or mental health. For the third year in a row, a total of **13 percent** gave this as their main reason – with **70 percent** of those saying their professional role had a negative impact on their physical health, and **84 percent** saying it had worsened their mental health.


Only **19.9 percent** of leavers said they would recommend a career in nursing or midwifery, compared to **19.8 percent** last year.

In the last 12 months, compared to the same period in 2023-2024

**+5.9%**  **UK-educated joiners**  
32,163

**+1.3%**  **UK-educated leavers**  
23,513


As of March 2025, compared to the same period in 2023-2024

**+3.1%**  **Adult nurses**  
628,897

**+4.9%**  **Mental health nurses**  
103,852

**+4.2%**  **Children's nurses**  
61,493

**+0.9%**  **Learning disabilities nurses**  
16,832

**+0.2%**  **Specialist community public health nurses**  
29,336

## Differing rates of growth between the professions

It is encouraging to see a **4.8 percent** uplift in the number of midwives joining the register over the past year, compared to the previous year (**3,704 against 3,534**). This helped drive the number of midwives on the register to **46,606** – an increase of **5.6 percent** since March 2024.

The number of nursing associates grew on the register at an even greater rate (**17.5 percent**), which is not surprising given that it is still a relatively new profession. There are now **12,782** nursing associates on the register, compared to **10,881** in March 2024.

The number of registered nurses rose by **just 3 percent** over the past year, and there were fewer new nurse joiners in the year to March 2025 than during the previous year (**45,597 against 53,077**).

## A more ethnically diverse register

The proportion of all registered professionals from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds<sup>2</sup> has continued to grow. These professionals now account for just under a third of everyone on the register (**32.5 percent**, compared to **30.6 percent** on 31 March 2024).

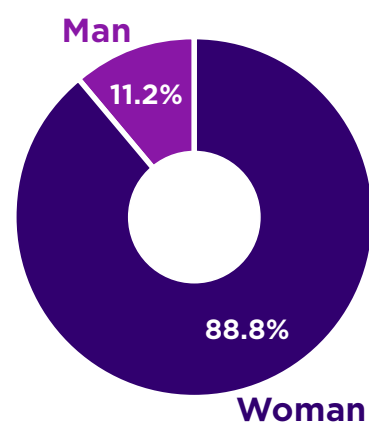
This makes it more important than ever that professionals can practise in an environment that values diversity and tackles racism. As the professional regulator, we also have a responsibility to deliver fair outcomes and positive experiences for everyone on our register, regardless of their background or characteristics.

This is something we are working towards through our [Fitness to Practise Improvement Plan](#) and [Culture Transformation Plan](#). Also, in April we signed the UNISON Anti-Racism Charter as part of our commitment to becoming an anti-racist organisation. Furthermore, we will shortly publish new equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategic objectives and targets for our organisation.

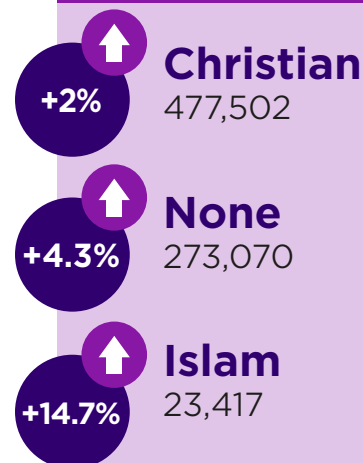
<sup>2</sup> The NMC recognises that language in this area is constantly changing and that the people included within such broad terms encompasses diverse ethnic groups. We regularly keep the language that we use under review.

**32.5%** of the register from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds<sup>2</sup>. In 2020, **20.1%** of the register were from Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds.

### Gender split of the register



### Most common specified religions, change in 12 months



## People are joining our register for the first time later

This was the first year that **more than 50 percent** of new joiners were aged 31 and above, following a gradual increase over time in the proportion of joiners within this age range.

This is predominantly due to large numbers of people aged 31-50 joining from outside the UK (**58.3 percent** of international joiners over the last year).

However, there has also been an increase in the number of people from the UK joining the professions in their thirties or later – in the last six months, **46.5 percent** of UK joiners were aged 31 or above, whereas five years ago the figure was **37 percent**.

## All fields of practice show growth this year

This is the first year since 2019-2020, that we've reported an increase in the number of learning disability nurses on our register. Albeit, the increase is very modest (**16,832** on 31 March 2025, compared to **16,683** on 31 March 2025).

## Sharing insights to support the sector

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 on [research@nmc-uk.org](mailto:research@nmc-uk.org).



**Paul Rees MBE**

Interim Chief Executive and Registrar

As of March 2025

**44 years,  
3 months**

was the average age of people on the register

**51.1%** of new joiners were 31 or above



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





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



## What we do

Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery practice that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the independent regulator of more than 853,000 nurses and midwives in the UK and nursing associates in England, we have an important role to play in making this vision a reality.

We're here to protect the public by upholding high professional nursing and midwifery standards, which the public has a right to expect. That's why we're improving the way we regulate, enhancing our support for colleagues, professionals and the public, and working with our partners to influence the future of health and social care.




Our core role is to **regulate**. We set and promote high education and professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England and quality assure their education programmes. We maintain the integrity of the register of those eligible to practise. And we investigate concerns about professionals – something that affects very few people on our register every year.

To regulate well, we **support** nursing and midwifery professionals and the public. We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout professionals' careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address challenges they face. We work collaboratively so everyone feels engaged and empowered to shape our work.

We work with our partners to address common concerns, share our data, insight and learning, to **influence** and inform decision-making and help drive improvement in health and social care for people and communities.

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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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