

**The Nursing and Midwifery Council
(NMC) during the Covid-19
transition; Information pack.**

7 August 2020

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Introduction

This pack provides the latest information about the work of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) during the coronavirus pandemic, including our actions as we transition from the emergency towards ongoing management of Covid-19 in health and social care.

As the independent regulator of nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England, we have played an active role in expanding and supporting the nursing and midwifery workforce during this challenging time. We made a series of [operational changes](#) in response to the pandemic, in order to prioritise our core regulatory functions and ensure we continue to regulate nurses, midwives and nursing associates effectively.

As we move from the emergency into recovery, and as health and social care transitions towards a new normal, the NMC is gradually introducing changes to support the nursing and midwifery workforce to provide the best and safest care to people. We are now resuming areas of our work that we had been required to pause during the emergency, in accordance with government guidelines. We will continue to work collaboratively to ensure that the people on our register have the knowledge and skills to deliver safe, kind and high quality care to people.

If you have any questions about the detail contained in this pack then please get in touch using the information provided under [contact us](#).

The temporary register

As you will be aware, the Government introduced emergency legislation that enabled the NMC to create the Covid-19 temporary register. This means we have temporarily registered fit, proper and suitably experienced people, so that they can practise if they want to and feel able to do so during the Covid-19 emergency.

When we opened the temporary register on 27 March, 7,510 nursing and midwifery professionals appeared on it. There are now over 14,000 professionals on the temporary register.

The latest published breakdown of the temporary register (data as of 5 August 2020):

	<i>Country of address</i>					
	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	Not given	UK
Midwife	650	14	74	27	-	765
Nurse	11,204	292	1,398	590	41	13,525
Midwife; Nurse	121	4	12	4	1	142
Total	11,975	310	1,484	621	42	14,432

The temporary register will remain open as long as the Secretary of State for Health declares Covid-19 to be an emergency. We continue to work collaboratively with the Department of Health and Social Care and the Devolved Administrations to make any decisions in relation to the temporary register, including the future transition out of the emergency situation. Further information on the temporary register can be found on [our website](#).

Our regulation

Update on the implementation of the new Test of Competence

We use the Test of Competence (ToC) to assess the skills and knowledge of people wanting to join our register from overseas or re-join our register after a long period away from practice.

In 2019 we started work to update our ToC to better reflect our innovative new [standards](#) for both nurses and midwives. This was due to go live this summer, but due to Covid-19 and the need for us to support the health and social care workforce, we have decided to postpone the implementation of the new ToC until April 2021.

As we begin to move out of the emergency and toward our new normal, we'll resume our work to implement the new ToC. This new timetable will make sure we're able to fully engage with our partners so that all candidates, employers and recruiters are ready for the changes.

More information about how the ToC will be changing can be found [on our website](#).

We also have a [dedicated webhub page for overseas candidates](#). This outlines how our overseas registration process has been impacted by Covid-19.

Information about attending hearings during the Covid-19 pandemic

Since the start of the pandemic we have been prioritising interim order and substantive order review hearings and holding those virtually.

We will continue to hold those events virtually in the coming months. However, as of September 2020 we will be resuming some physical hearings and further expanding the types of cases we consider at virtual hearings.

We'll be following government guidelines to make sure all attendees at our hearing centres are welcomed into a [Covid-19 secure environment](#).

More information about attending physical and virtual hearings during the Covid-19 pandemic can be found [on our website](#). Guidance and an accompanying process is currently in development which will set out how members of the public will be able to request access to our hearings that are taking place virtually.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

NMC to contribute to new research investigating Covid-19 effect on BAME health and care workers

We will be contributing to the UK Research Study in Ethnicity and Covid-19 outcomes in Healthcare workers (UK-REACH), [announced](#) in late July by the National Institute for Health Research and UK Research and Innovation.

The UK-REACH study, led by Dr Manish Pareek at the University of Leicester, seeks to calculate the risk of Covid-19 to black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) healthcare professionals across all four countries of the UK, and aims to provide that evidence to policymakers so they can make decisions in real-time. The study will follow a group of BAME healthcare workers over the next 12 months to understand their job risks, any changes they may have made to their work or social behaviours as a result of Covid-19, and assess their physical and mental health.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed pre-existing health inequalities and the NMC is committed to working with others through initiatives like the UK-REACH study to understand why, in order to seek better support for BAME nursing and midwifery professionals and create valuable learning for the wider health and care system.

The NMC is part of a team of health and care organisations supporting the research, including the General Medical Council, General Dental Council and NHS Employers.

For more information about our involvement in the study, read our full [news story](#).

How our response to Covid-19 has affected diverse groups

In July we published our [equality impact assessment](#) (EqIA) for the action we've taken in response to Covid-19. This covers temporary registration, our emergency education standards, changes to fitness to practise, and all other changes we made in relation to Covid-19 up until the end of June.

We would be grateful for your feedback on this EqIA, particularly in answer two questions:

- Have we missed anything that is in our role to do or influence?
- Looking to the future, are there any particular topics of concern or opportunities that we should focus on?

If you have any feedback on the EqIA please send it to equality@nmc-uk.org. We'll update this document regularly, for as long as we're carrying out activity to respond to the pandemic and support the professions.

Other updates

NMC to consult on use of emergency powers beyond 31 March 2021

In March, the Council approved emergency rules to give us greater flexibility and ensure that we could carry out our important regulatory work during the pandemic. The Department of Health and Social Care proposed a change which would allow us to retain greater flexibility indefinitely, and at their July meeting our Council approved proposed changes to the emergency rules to give greater clarity about holding virtual hearings in public and to correct some drafting errors.

We have been in close dialogue with the representative bodies on the proposed changes and have discussed them with our public support steering group. We're grateful to them for their engagement and input so far and will continue to work with them and seek their views to as we begin to implement these changes.

We also recognise that it wouldn't be right for us to use the powers indefinitely without a proper public consultation. We therefore plan to consult with the public, professionals, and our partners on our approach to using these powers beyond 31 March 2021 and we will take the outcome of that consultation back to the Council.

Further information

Previous packs with additional information can be found on our website here;

- [24 July](#)
- [10 July](#)
- [25 June](#)
- [15 June](#)
- [22 May](#)
- [13 May](#)
- [27 April](#)
- [20 April](#)

Frequently asked questions

We are monitoring the queries we are regularly being asked by registrants and stakeholders and collating a list of responses to frequently asked questions. A full list of our FAQs in relation to Covid-19 can be found on [our website](#).

Contact us

If people in your networks have any general queries about the NMC, they can contact us at 020 7333 9333. If they have questions about our temporary register they should email tempreg@nmc-uk.org or call 020 7637 7181.

As a key stakeholder of the NMC, our stakeholder relations team is also here to support with your queries and any feedback you have on our work. You can contact the team at stakeholders@nmc-uk.org.

If you are a parliamentarian, civil servant or elected official, our public affairs team will be able to answer any queries. You can contact the team at publicaffairs@nmc-uk.org.

Our [Employer Link Service](#) run an advice line for employers and relevant stakeholders in health and social care. They are available to support employers with questions or concerns about fitness to practise and the NMC's work more broadly. Call 020 7462 8850 to speak to one of our regulation advisers, or email the team at employerlinkservice@nmcuk.org.