

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

18 September 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 published breakdown of the temporary register (data as of 26 August 2020) can be found below. We will in future provide an update on our temporary register data on a monthly basis.

	<i>Country of address</i>					
	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	Not given	UK
Midwife	647	14	74	26	-	761
Nurse	11,196	287	1,397	591	41	13,512
Midwife; Nurse	120	4	12	4	1	141
Total	11,963	305	1,483	621	42	14,414

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](#).

NMC publishes Covid-19 temporary register analysis

On 10 September we published [analysis of our Covid-19 temporary register](#).

The analysis – taken from data and survey responses of those on our temporary register as of 2 July 2020 – highlights a number of findings:

- Nearly 50 percent of the returning professionals on our temporary register have indicated they would consider re-joining our permanent register.
- Almost all overseas applicants (92 percent) had started practising by the time they responded to the survey. This is likely due to the fact that many were

already working in a 'pre-registration' capacity while waiting to undertake their objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) to join our permanent register.

- Demographic characteristics of the groups varied significantly:
 - Overseas qualified professionals included more people from Asian or Black ethnic groups and more people under 40.
 - Returning professionals were older and mainly white, with more people declaring a disability.
- Of the former professionals who left our permanent register in the last 3 years, just under 14 percent had started practising while on the temporary register; and less than 6 percent of people who left between four and five years ago had started practising.

When the temporary register was established, the NMC's priority was to expand the nursing and midwifery workforce so that as many people as possible would be available to deal with the anticipated short term pressures on the NHS and social care. Thanks to the extraordinary effort of everyone working across the health and care systems in all four UK countries, these were less than expected. We are now considering how we can use the momentum from our temporary register to continue to support the growth of the nursing and midwifery workforce, as we move towards winter.

Our regulation

In-person fitness to practise hearings resume

As mentioned in our previous pack, in-person fitness to practise hearings, which were paused due to the initial impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, resumed from 14 September. More information about the resumption of in-person hearings, including the safety measures that have been introduced to ensure the wellbeing of those attending, can be found [on our website](#).

Equality, diversity and inclusion

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 have recently [updated our EqIA](#), and will continue to revise this document regularly, for as long as we're carrying out activity to respond to the pandemic and support the professions.

Consultations and inquiries

DHSC consultation on bureaucracy

The NMC has [submitted a response](#) to the Department of Health and Social Care's [consultation](#) on reducing bureaucracy in the health and social care system.

The consultation sought views on proposals for long term changes to rules and regulations, where temporary changes in response to Covid-19 have had a beneficial impact.

In our response we outlined our view that the aim of reducing bureaucracy appropriately while continuing to protect the public can be met by the implementation of the programme of regulatory reform arising from the Government's [Promoting professionalism, reforming regulation](#) consultation. Our experiences gained during Covid-19 have underlined the importance of empowering change and having the flexibility to improve, adapt and evolve, and we believe comprehensive and considered regulatory reform is vital for us ensure we are an organisation fit for the future.

Health and Social Care Committee inquiry on workforce burnout

We also recently submitted evidence to the Health and Social Care Committee (HSCC) [inquiry](#) on workforce burnout and resilience in the NHS and social care.

In our strategy for 2020 – 2025, which we published in April, we outlined our concerns about workforce pressures in nursing and midwifery care, and how shortages threaten the quality of care and the learning environment, as well as the wellbeing of staff. Many of these pressures have been exacerbated by Covid-19, which may challenge employers' ability to retain our essential nursing and midwifery professionals, as health and care services seek to recover.

We will shortly publish our submission to our website once the Committee has had an opportunity to consider it. In the meantime, if you would like further details regarding our response to the HSCC, please contact us at public.affairs@nmc-uk.org.

Further information

Our next pack will be sent out on the 2 October. Previous packs with additional information can be found on our website here:

- [4 September](#)
- [21 August](#)
- [7 August](#)
- [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 public.affairs@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.