

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

17 December 2020

A message from the NMC’s Chief Executive and Registrar.....	3
Introduction	4
The temporary register.....	5
Extension to eligibility to join our temporary register	5
Information about vaccines	6
Consultation on future use of emergency powers.....	6
Equality, diversity and inclusion	7
How our response to Covid-19 has affected diverse groups	7
UK REACH study	7
NMC responses to external developments and reports on Covid-19.....	7
Frequently asked questions	9

A message from the NMC's Chief Executive and Registrar

As 2020 comes to a close I have had a chance to pause and reflect on an extraordinary year. It has been a year in which the exceptional work of nursing and midwifery professionals has been celebrated more than ever, but in circumstances nobody would have wished for.

Thank you

In my role at the NMC, I've heard amazing stories about how nursing and midwifery professionals and their colleagues across health and social care have saved and changed lives this year. It's hard to find the right words to express my gratitude for the bravery and dedication shown by nurses, midwives and nursing associates in the face of such sustained challenge.

Looking forward to 2021

There has been some very encouraging news recently with the first phase of vaccinations underway, and hopefully more on the horizon. We all hope that this will soon bring this pandemic under control. Having done so much to care for people in 2020, the professionals on our register will continue to be at the heart of the national effort to respond to the pandemic in 2021.

I hope these packs sent to you throughout the year have been helpful in supporting you to understand the NMC's response to the pandemic. While this is the last pack we'll share this year, we will continue to provide these updates in 2021 and welcome any feedback you have on how to make them as informative and effective as possible.

In the meantime, best wishes for a safe festive season and a brighter New Year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andrea Sutcliffe'.

Andrea Sutcliffe CBE
Chief Executive and Registrar

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 have moved from the initial response to the pandemic towards ongoing management of its impact, the NMC is gradually introducing changes to support the nursing and midwifery workforce to provide the best and safest care to people. We have resumed areas of our work that we had been required to pause during the initial 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. Over 14,000 professionals joined the temporary register in total.

We are pleased that some of these temporary registrants are now joining our permanent register. Over 2,000 professionals with qualifications gained overseas have now passed the objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) and have joined our permanent register. This accounts for the majority of the decrease in overall temporary register numbers in the table below.

The published breakdown of the temporary register (data as of 30 November 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	651	13	74	28	-	766
Nurse	9,021	255	1,385	535	33	11,229
Midwife; Nurse	112	4	12	3	1	132
Total	9,784	272	1,471	566	34	12,127

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.

Extension to eligibility to join our temporary register

We recognise that professionals who have recently left our register may want to come back to support the response to Covid-19, in particular with the rollout of the vaccination programme, and have recently received a number of queries from individuals and employers about this. We want to support these individuals to do this.

From 16 December 2020, we have extended the groups of those who are eligible to join our Covid-19 temporary register to include those people whose registration lapsed between 1 March 2020 and 30 November 2020. We will not apply any conditions of practice to this group's temporary registration.

We will continue to support and encourage those professionals who want to re-join the permanent register to do so, but we hope this action supports those who have the skills and experience needed to help with the current demands on health and social care services.

Please visit our [website](#) for further information on this and who else is eligible to join the temporary register.

Information about vaccines

In recent weeks there have been a number of exciting developments regarding Covid-19 vaccines. The UK's medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has authorised the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine for use and the first phase of the vaccination programme is now underway.

Further vaccines are likely to be considered for approval in the coming weeks, and a national protocol is also being developed to enable those who are registered health and care professionals who do not normally vaccinate to safely administer a Covid-19 or flu vaccine.

In light of these developments, we have published a [dedicated webpage on vaccines](#), including information on how NMC registered professionals should act in line with the Code if involved in the administration of any Covid-19 or flu vaccine.

We will keep this webpage updated with the latest information as the situation develops.

Consultation on future use of emergency powers

On 4 November we launched a [consultation](#) on our future use of our powers, which we were granted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The consultation remains open for responses until 15 January 2021 and is seeking views on the following key areas:

- The NMC's use of virtual meetings and hearings
- Public access to hearings
- The number of people on a hearing panel
- The NMC's use of email to communicate notices of a hearing
- The NMC's use of extensions for revalidation and fee payment.

Find out how you can learn more and get involved 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 helps us to understand the effects of our activities on different groups of people and any actions we need to take as a result. We've recently [updated](#) our EqIA to make sure it reflects our most recent actions.

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.

Our EqIA will continue to be revised regularly, for as long as we're carrying out activity to respond to the pandemic and support the professions.

UK REACH study

We are [supporting](#) a national research study, UK REACH, investigating if, how, and why ethnicity affects Covid-19 clinical outcomes for people working in health and social care.

Our Chief Executive and Registrar, Andrea Sutcliffe, [has written to](#) a sample of half a million nurses and midwives to invite them to take part in this national study. Any professionals on our permanent register who didn't receive an invitation to take part in the research can express an interest through the [UK REACH website](#).

All the information the research teams collect is confidential and doesn't affect professional registration. We won't know who is taking part in the study.

NMC responses to external developments and reports on Covid-19

- We [responded](#) to the Health Foundation's report highlighting risk to pandemic recovery due to nursing shortages. In our response we called for a long-term sustainable workforce plan that addresses the gaps and support required by all nursing and midwifery professionals, particularly those working in the community or in mental health and learning disability services.

- We [responded](#) to the Care Quality Commission's interim report on the use of do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (DNACPR) decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic. We said that it is horrifying to hear of DNACPR orders being applied without people's involvement, consent and individual needs being taken into account, so it's vital that a clear light is shone on this issue. We look forward to collaborating on the next phase of the review so that high professional standards can be maintained and people's rights are supported in the best way possible.

Further information

We will make updates to this pack on a regular basis and alert you to when these changes are made. Previous packs with additional information can be found on our website here:

- [23 November](#)
- [18 September](#)
- [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.