

**The Nursing and Midwifery Council  
(NMC) Covid-19 stakeholder  
information pack**

**18 February 2021**

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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 in response to the second wave and related hospital admissions, alongside winter pressures and the vital rollout of the vaccine programme.

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. Last spring, we set up our temporary register and invited three groups of professionals to join. With the crisis carrying a high risk of a shortage of nurses in the coming weeks, we have expanded these invitations to additional groups.

We also made a series of [operational changes](#) in response to the outbreak of the pandemic, to prioritise our core regulatory functions and ensure we continue to regulate nurses, midwives and nursing associates effectively. Since the summer, we have resumed areas of our work that we had been required to pause during the initial emergency, in accordance with government guidelines.

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 2020, 7,510 nursing and midwifery professionals appeared on it. Over 14,000 professionals joined the temporary register in spring 2020, and the total currently stands at over 15,000.

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.

The published breakdown of the temporary register (data as of 31 January 2021) can be found below.

	Country of address					UK
	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	Not given	
<b>Midwife</b>	748	14	92	39	-	893
<b>Nurse</b>	11,466	315	1,638	676	158	14,253
<b>Midwife; Nurse</b>	143	4	19	9	1	176
<b>Total</b>	12,357	333	1,749	724	159	15,322

The latest data shows that the number of nurses and midwives on the temporary register has increased from 12,970 on 4 January 2021 to 15,322 on 31 January 2021. This increase has been driven by changes introduced recently: [inviting additional cohorts of overseas-trained nurses to the temporary register](#), and [extending eligibility for returners to join the temporary register](#), with those who left the permanent register between 1 March 2020 and 30 November 2020 now eligible to apply.

The temporary register will remain open as long as the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care 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.

## Introducing a new recovery education standard

Covid-19 has inevitably had a significant impact on student learning, especially in practice placements. This impact has been particularly acute for nursing students. After engaging with partners across the UK, on 18 February 2021 we [introduced a new recovery standard](#) to ensure the next generation of nurses qualify with the skills and knowledge they need to deliver safe, effective and kind care.

The introduction of the new recovery standard allows student nurses to practise and learn through simulated practice learning experiences where clinical practice isn't available or isn't possible.

Approved education institutions (AEIs) can choose how to apply this recovery standard, considering local circumstances, availability of places and individual students' need.

The amount of practice learning time spent in simulated practice learning experience can be up to 300 hours across a programme's duration. Student nurses' final placement before registration should be in a conventional clinical placement.

We will ask AEs to report back to us on how they are using the recovery standard and how they are maintaining students' practice learning opportunities and achievement of proficiencies.

This new recovery standard is in addition to the [recovery standards and emergency standards](#) we have published over recent months. As with our other recovery standards, we will review these standards regularly.

### **Research into pre-registration programme requirements**

Now that the EU exit transition period has ended, the United Kingdom is no longer required to follow EU law on requirements for nursing and midwifery education programmes. This change has facilitated the introduction of the new recovery standard.

As well as introducing this change to respond to the current emergency situation, we have commissioned independent research to help us understand whether we should move away from any of the EU requirements and change our pre-registration programme standards. This research will look at both nursing and midwifery, with elements for each profession considered separately. We will soon invite registrants, students, employers and public groups to complete a survey about the current standards to inform this research.

### **Launch date for new test of competence**

We use the test of competence 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.

Since 2019 we have been working to develop a new test that reflects our new [standards for nurses](#) and [standards for midwives](#). We will start testing candidates with the new test from 2 August 2021.

We had planned to launch the test in summer 2020, but changed this to April 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The current wave of the pandemic continues to cause increasing pressure on health and care services and those working on the front line. We believe that introducing a new test in April is likely to add more pressure to candidates, employers and recruiters, so we have decided to move this to August instead.

You can read further information on our website on [how the test will be changing](#).

## 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:

- [18 January](#)
- [17 December](#)
- [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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:employerlinkservice@nmcuk.org).