

The NMC register England mid-year update

1 April - 30 September 2023



Welcome to our mid-year report on the NMC register and what it tells us about the nursing and midwifery workforce in England.

Our unique data provide the definitive account of how many professionals are eligible to practise in the country, how many are joining and leaving the workforce, where in the world they were educated, their demographic characteristics and more.

The big picture

There are more nurses, midwives and nursing associates* on the register in England than ever before – **622,897** in September this year. That's **12,545** (2.1 percent) more than just six months ago, and **74,173** (13.5 percent) more compared to September 2018. This is encouraging given the well-publicised pressure on health and care services at a time of rising demand for care.

This includes a record **571,856 nurses** in England, the majority of whom (79.8 percent) are registered as adult nurses. However, the proportion of learning disability nurses has decreased over the past five years. Reversing this trend is especially important given the recent Health Services Safety Investigations Body report, *Caring for adults with learning disabilities in acute hospitals*. The report highlighted the importance of learning disability nursing services and found the health and care system is not always designed to care effectively for people with learning disabilities.

There are now **35,290 midwives** in England. A milestone has also been passed with **10,505 nursing associates** on the register. There are also **5,246 dual registrants** (both a nurse and midwife) in England.

622,897

professionals on the register in England



In the last six months

+1.9%



Nurses

571,856

+2.8%



Midwives

35,290

-1.5%



Dual registrants

5,246

+13.1%



Nursing Associates

10,505

*The nursing associate role was introduced in 2019. Nursing associates may live in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, but can only practise in this role in England.

The growth we're seeing in England is being driven by strong recruitment and steady retention. A record **17,116 new joiners** in the six months to September (27 percent more than the 13,480 in the same period last year). There were **9,977 leavers**, which is almost exactly the same as the same period last year (9,978), and only a marginal decrease as a proportion of the register.

Strong rate of domestic recruitment

Most of the joiners since April were educated in the UK: **12,134**. That's a **24 percent increase** compared to the same period last year (9,789), and 32.2 percent higher than five years ago (9,180).

International recruitment also gaining pace

International recruitment in England is also strong. The number of new international joiners grew by **almost 35 percent** compared to the same period last year – from **3,691 to 4,982**. And the true figure will be even higher because professionals aren't required to give us a UK address in order to join the register. Professionals can help us to further enhance the value of our data by giving us their UK address as soon as they have one which they can do through [NMC Online](#).

As with the rest of the UK, India is the largest source of international recruitment in England (29.1 percent of all international joiners in the last six months). However, professionals from the Philippines are still the largest international cohort in England at **30.1 percent** of the total.

We are also seeing a continued rise in the number of new joiners from 'red list' countries, most prominently from Nigeria and Ghana.* Professionals educated in Nigeria represent **14.2 percent** of international joiners in the six months to September, while **9.1 percent** joined from Ghana.

*[The Department of Health and Social Care's code of practice for international recruitment of health and social care personnel](#), prohibits active recruitment from 'red list' countries designated by the World Health Organisation. The Code does not prevent individual health workers from 'red list' countries seeking employment independently, but employers should not be actively recruiting from those countries.

In the last six months, compared to the same period last year



As of September 2023:



Top countries of education and change, since April



We're calling on employers and agencies across health and care in England to be mindful of the Department of Health and Social Care's code of practice for international recruitment of health and social care personnel. Internationally educated nursing and midwifery professionals make a vital difference to the health and wellbeing of people across the UK, but it is essential not to undermine health systems in countries with the most pressing workforce challenges.

Steady retention rate welcome

There will always be a level of turnover of the register as professionals retire, or in some cases leave the register early, often citing workplace factors. We therefore welcome the steady retention rate we're seeing in England – the number of leavers in the past six months being equivalent to **1.6 percent** of the register (1.7 percent in the six months to September 2022 and 1.8 percent in the same period five years ago).

A continued focus on retaining skilled, knowledgeable people in their profession, will support the sustainable growth of the workforce. Our 2023 [Spotlight on Nursing and Midwifery report](#) highlights some areas for further improvement. For example, more consistent delivery of 'preceptorship' programmes that welcome and integrate new professionals into their new teams and workplaces.

The changing profile of professionals on the register in England

The data show that **29.6 percent** of UK educated joiners in England since April were from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. That's compared to **27.5 percent** last year, and **22 percent** five years ago. This highlights a steady and consistent rise in the ethnic diversity of new recruits who were educated in the UK.

In the last six months



This, together with growing international recruitment, is continuing to alter the ethnic profile of the register in England. In September, **30.3 percent** of professionals were from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. That's compared to **29.2 percent** six months ago, and **22.1 percent** five years ago.

Most international joiners are aged 40 or below which means we are seeing a rise in the total number of professionals within the lower age ranges in England. The total proportion of nursing and midwifery professionals **aged 21-40** is now **41.4 percent**, compared to **40.8 percent** just six months ago, and **37.4 percent** in September 2018.

Improving the quality of our data

We hope these key insights, together with our **comprehensive data tables**, will support workforce planning in England, 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](#)**.



Andrea Sutcliffe,
Chief Executive and Registrar



**44 years,
4 months**

average age of
professionals in
England

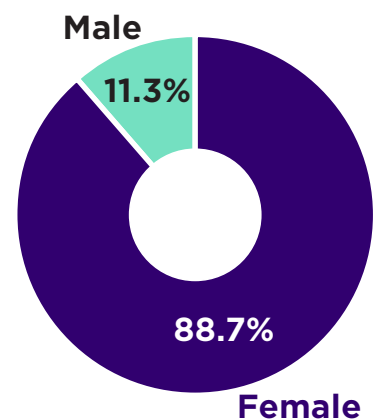


30.3%

of register in
England from Black
and minority ethnic
backgrounds.
In 2018, **22.1%** of
register in England
from Black and
minority ethnic
backgrounds.



Gender split of
the register



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 public 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 808,000 nursing and midwifery professionals, we have an important role to play in making this a reality.

Our core role is to **regulate**.

First, we promote high education and professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England. Second, we maintain the register of professionals eligible to practise. Third, we investigate concerns about nurses, midwives and nursing associates – something that affects a tiny minority of professionals each year. We believe in giving professionals the chance to address concerns, but we'll always take action when needed.



To regulate well, we **support** our professions and the public.

We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout people's careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address new challenges. We also support people involved in our investigations, and we're increasing our visibility so people feel engaged and empowered to shape our work.

Regulating and supporting our professions allows us to **influence** health and social care. We share intelligence from our regulatory activities and work with our partners to support workforce planning and sector-wide decision making. We use our voice to speak up for a healthy and inclusive working environment for our professions.

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