

# The NMC register Northern Ireland

1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021



# About us

**Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the professional regulator of almost 732,000 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 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 less than one percent 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.



# About our register

We keep the register of all nurses and midwives eligible to practise in the UK, and nursing associates who can practise in England. We currently publish data from our register every six months. Our [previous report](#) was a mid-year update that we published in November 2020.

## How to interpret our data

Not everyone on our permanent register will currently be working as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate, or in the field they're registered in.

We collect the registered addresses of the professionals on our register. The data in the report is about those professionals with registered addresses in Northern Ireland.

All of the people who joined our register in 2020–2021 joined through different processes, depending on whether they were from the UK, European Economic Area (EEA) or outside the EEA. Now that the UK has left the EU, everyone joining our register from outside the UK follows the same international process. However, no applications from people in the EEA that were received from 1 January 2021 were completed by 31 March 2021.

The number of joiners, leavers and total people registered won't add up exactly. That's because the joiners' data only includes people joining the register for the first time. It doesn't include people who re-joined after a break from practising.

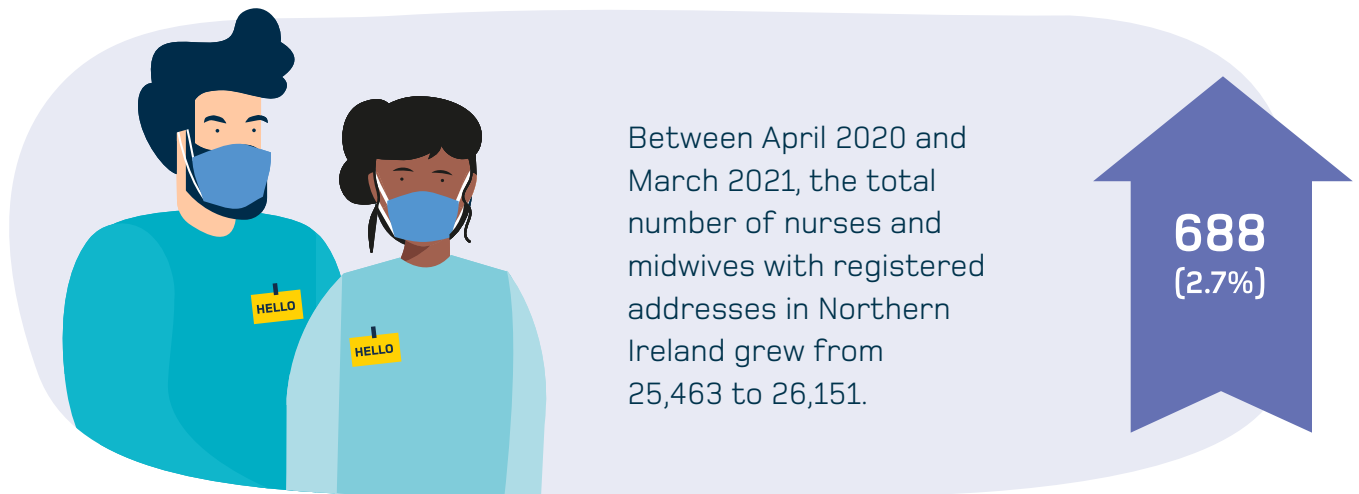
The number of joiners and leavers are cumulative totals from the whole year (1 April–31 March). We're working to improve our systems so we can provide a more complete picture of joiners and leavers in the future.

Our register changes every day and can vary considerably from the start of the month to the end of the month. Therefore, our data only offers a snapshot in time. This report gives a snapshot of our register on 31 March 2021.

We continually review the quality and content of our data and information. When improved data or additional information become available, we retrospectively update our previously published information. This means that when comparing data in our latest reports against some of our previous publications, you may see small differences in some data.

In March 2020 we established a Covid-19 temporary register to support the UK's response to the coronavirus pandemic. Data from the Covid-19 temporary register is included in its own section at the end of this report.

# Size of our permanent register in Northern Ireland on 31 March 2021



**Table 1**  
**Total number of people on the permanent register by registration type with an address in Northern Ireland**

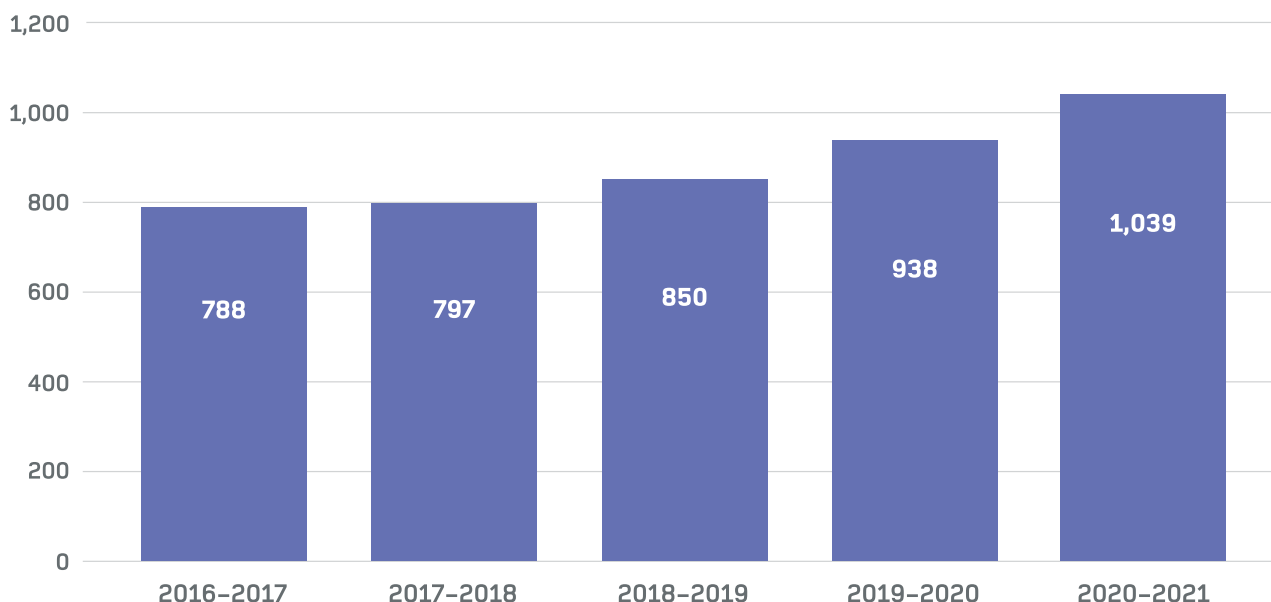
Registration type	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Nurse	22,439	22,967	23,324	23,953	24,596
Midwife	1,144	1,173	1,193	1,212	1,247
Dual registrant (nurse and midwife)	305	308	294	298	308
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,888</b>	<b>24,448</b>	<b>24,811</b>	<b>25,463</b>	<b>26,151</b>

## Joining the permanent register

A total of 1,039 people joined our permanent register in Northern Ireland for the first time in 2020–2021. That's 101 (10.8 percent) more than the previous year. The number of joiners has grown steadily over the past five years.

Figure 1

### People with an address in Northern Ireland joining the permanent register for the first time



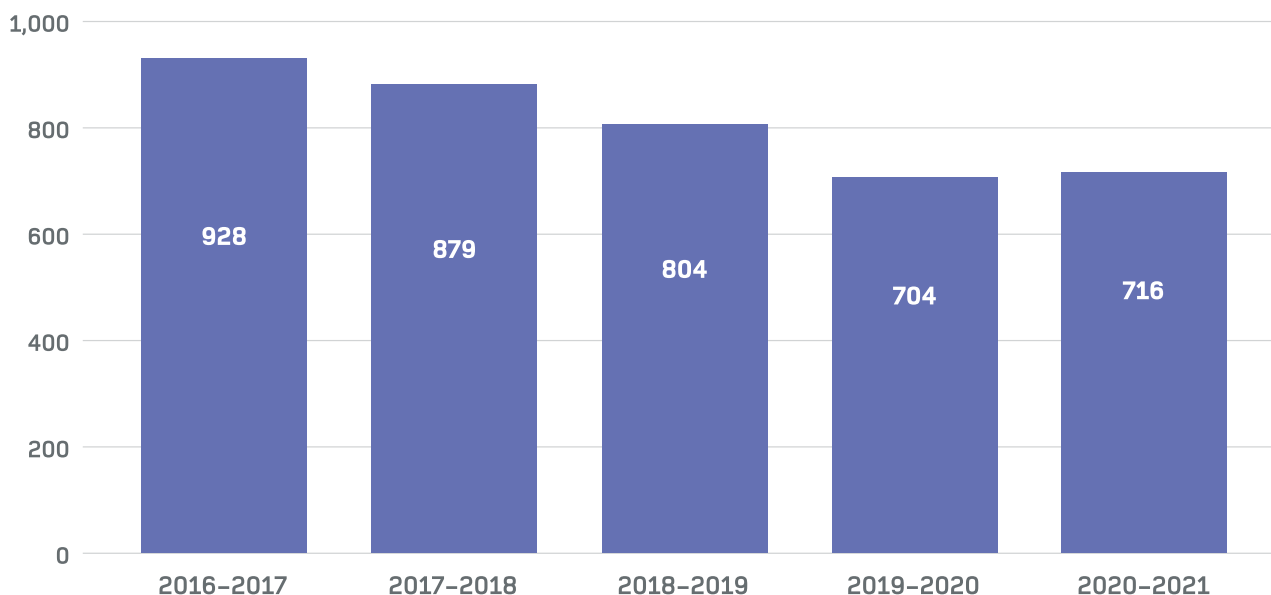
Joiners' data doesn't include those re-joining the register having previously left. Also, the overall number on the register is from one point in time, whereas the joiners' and leavers' data are the sum of activity over twelve months. Therefore, these figures won't add up exactly.

## Leaving the permanent register

For the first time since 2016–2017, the number of people leaving the permanent register in Northern Ireland has increased, but only marginally. In 2020–2021, 716 people left. That's 12 (1.7 percent) more than the previous year.

Figure 2

### People with an address in Northern Ireland leaving the permanent register



## Professionals who trained in the European Economic Area (EEA)

There were minor changes in the number of people on the permanent register in Northern Ireland who trained in the EEA. Romania remained the most frequent EEA country of training, with 274 registered professionals, followed by the Republic of Ireland with 149.

**Table 2**

### Total number of people on the permanent register in Northern Ireland by country of training in the EEA (top five countries)

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Romania	237	266	267	274	274
Republic of Ireland	97	105	121	131	149
Poland	63	66	69	70	68
Portugal	64	68	68	67	62
Italy	35	30	30	30	31
<b>Total EEA</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>670</b>

## Professionals who trained outside the European Economic Area (EEA)

There was a significant increase in the number of professionals on the permanent register in Northern Ireland who trained outside the EEA. Proportionally the number of professionals who trained in Zimbabwe increased by 78 percent. But there are still many more registered professionals who trained in India or the Philippines.

**Table 3**

### Total number of people on the register in Northern Ireland by country of training outside the EEA (top five countries)

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Philippines	760	829	877	982	1,069
India	620	641	644	680	784
Zimbabwe	5	10	16	41	73
Nigeria	10	10	21	58	66
South Africa	39	41	42	43	46
<b>Total outside EEA</b>	<b>1,523</b>	<b>1,624</b>	<b>1,701</b>	<b>1,936</b>	<b>2,207</b>

This data is based on people on our permanent register with a registered address in Northern Ireland. Some professionals on our permanent register who trained overseas may still have registered addresses outside the UK and therefore will not be included here. Data on the number of people on our permanent register with addresses outside the UK can be found in the UK registration data report.

# Profile of the permanent register in Northern Ireland

## Age

There was a 5 percent rise in the combined number of people aged 21–40 on our permanent register in Northern Ireland. The combined number of people aged 56 and above also increased by 6.2 percent. There was a 1.4 percent decrease in the number of people aged 41–55. This general pattern of growth in the lower and upper age brackets, and a squeeze in the middle, reflects the UK picture.

Table 4

**Age profile of the permanent register in Northern Ireland**

	March 2017		March 2018		March 2019		March 2020		March 2021	
21–30	4,001	+2.6%	4,195	+4.8%	4,363	+4%	4,500	+3.1%	4,696	+4.4%
31–40	5,274	+1.6%	5,529	+4.8%	5,661	+2.4%	6,062	+7.1%	6,362	+4.9%
41–50	6,420	-3%	6,305	-1.8%	6,172	-2.1%	6,076	-1.6%	6,025	-0.8%
51–55	3,981	-1.1%	3,920	-1.5%	3,696	-5.7%	3,511	-5%	3,424	-2.5%
56–60	2,711	+5.1%	2,884	+6.4%	3,097	+7.4%	3,246	+4.8%	3,356	+3.4%
61–70	1,435	+4.5%	1,540	+7.3%	1,747	+13.4%	1,986	+13.7%	2,189	+10.2%
71 and above	66	-1.5%	75	+13.6%	75	n/a	82	+9.3%	99	+20.7%

The percentage changes shown are from year to year within each age group.

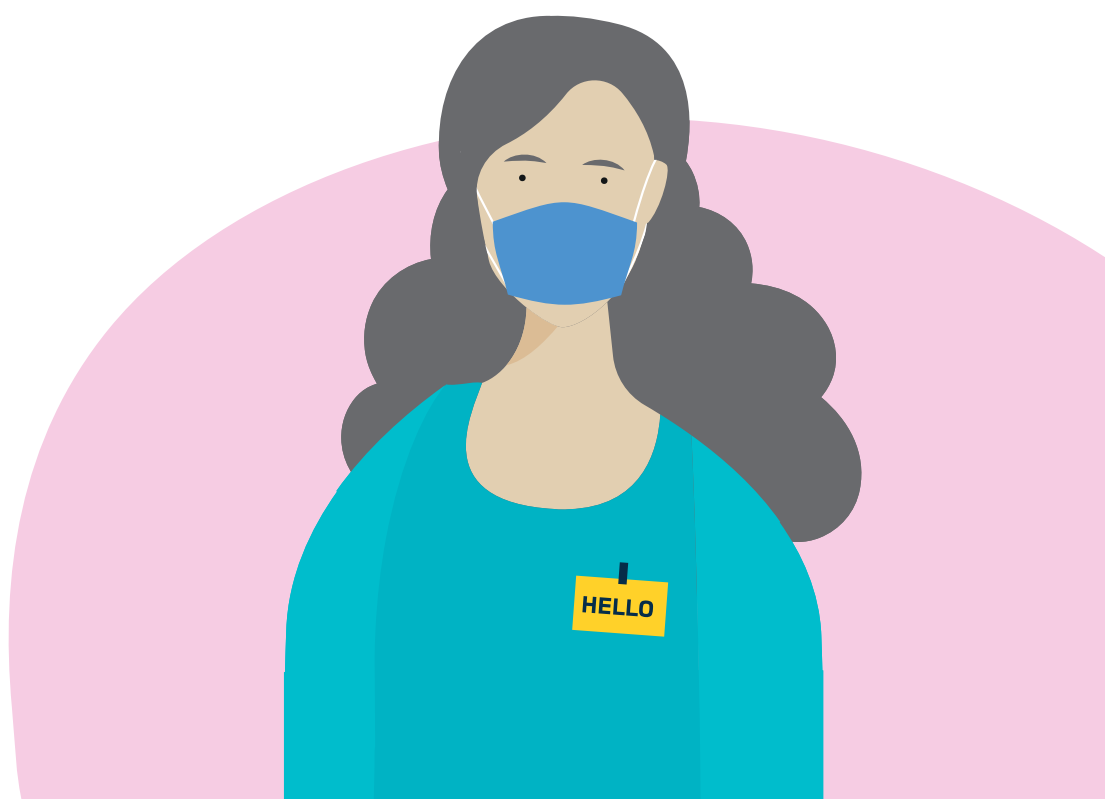
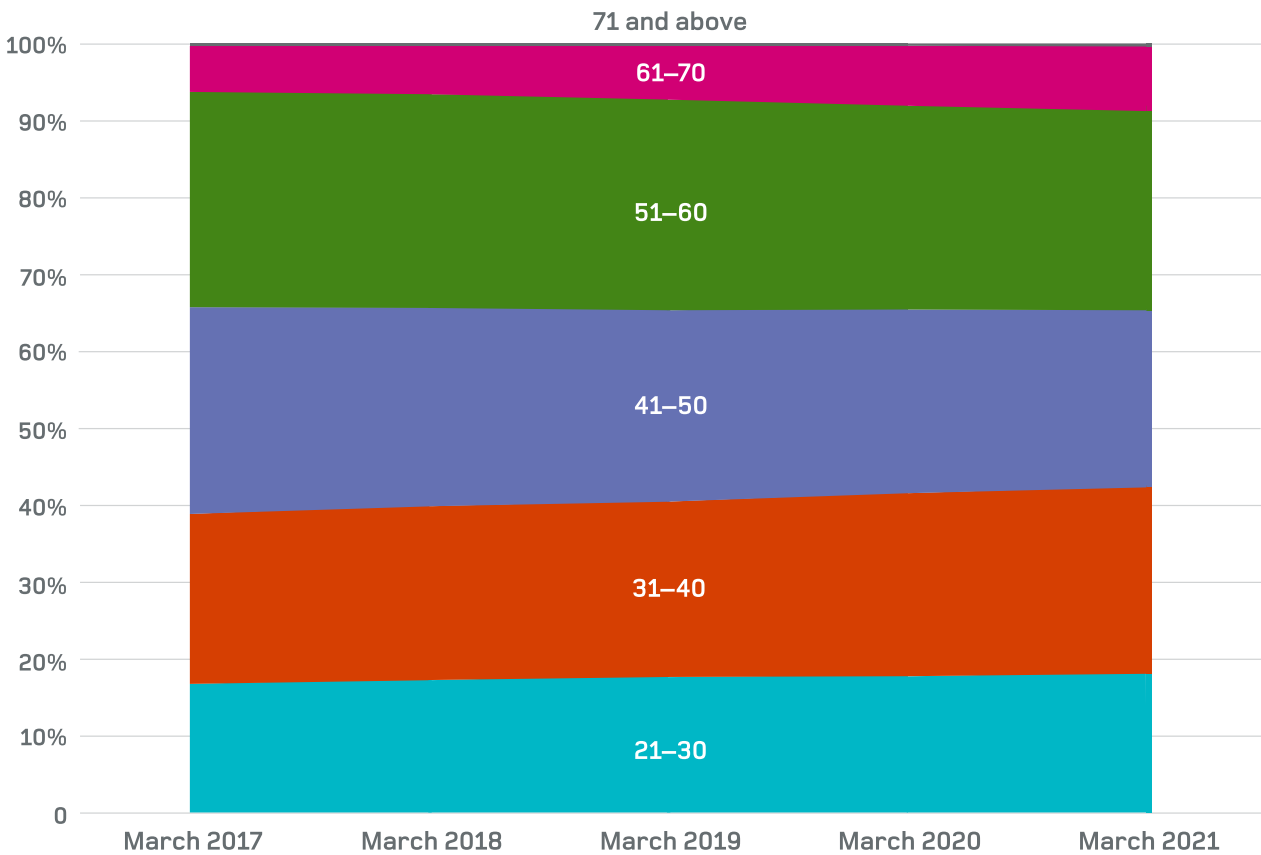


Figure 3

### Age profile of the permanent register in Northern Ireland



### Gender



**92%**

of people on our permanent register in Northern Ireland identify as female



**8%**

of people on our permanent register in Northern Ireland identify as male

This is slightly different from the UK picture, where 89 percent of people identify as female and 11 percent as male.

Of the 26,151 professionals on the permanent register in Northern Ireland, 100 said their gender is not the same as it was at the time of birth.



## Ethnicity

Table 5

### Ethnicity profile of the permanent register in Northern Ireland

	Nurses, midwives and nursing associates
Arab	3
Asian – Any other Asian background	66
Asian – Bangladeshi	2
Asian – Chinese	21
Asian – Filipina/Filipino	961
Asian – Indian	734
Asian – Pakistani	4
Black – African	246
Black – Any other black background	12
Black – Caribbean	13
Mixed – Any other mixed /multiple ethnic background	18
Mixed – White and Asian	48
Mixed – White and black African	14
Mixed – White and black Caribbean	131
Other – Any other ethnic group	67
Prefer not to say	384
Unknown	192
White – Any other white background	595
White – English/Welsh/Scottish/ Northern Irish/British	17,825
White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0
White – Irish	4,815
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,151</b>

# Fields of nursing practice

The biggest proportional rise was in the number of children's nurses, with a 3.5 percent increase.

The 1.6 percent increase in mental health nurses continues the steady rise over the past five years. Meanwhile the number of learning disability decreased marginally following a period of steady growth.

This data doesn't tell us what role nurses are currently working in. Nurses can hold more than one qualification and don't always work in the fields they are registered in.

Table 6

## Nurses registered in the four fields of practice with an address in Northern Ireland

	Adult		Children		Learning disabilities		Mental health	
March 2017	18,451	+0.5%	1,656	n/a	787	-1.4%	2,857	-0.2%
March 2018	18,856	+2.2%	1,710	+3.3%	804	+2.2%	2,882	+0.9%
March 2019	19,075	+1.2%	1,749	+2.3%	817	+1.6%	2,923	+1.4%
March 2020	19,623	+2.9%	1,798	+2.8%	826	+1.1%	2,952	+1%
March 2021	20,158	+2.7%	1,861	+3.5%	824	-0.2%	2,999	+1.6%

The percentage changes shown are from year to year within each field of practice.



# SCPHN and specialist practice qualifications

A nurse or midwife can have multiple additional qualifications. Specialist community and public health nursing (SCPHN) is a distinct part of our register. Someone on our register can become a specialist community public health nurse by taking an approved programme and achieving the right standards.

Where an area of practice is identified on our register, this indicates the area the qualification focused on. 'Specialist practitioner' refers to someone who has a specialist practice qualification (SPQ). SPQs are post-registration qualifications that relate to particular fields of practice. However, gaining an SPQ doesn't change the field a person is registered in.

**Table 7**

## **Total number of registered Specialist Community and Public Health Nurses with an address in Northern Ireland**

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Health visitors	824	850	862	912	924
Occupational health nurses	118	118	116	110	112
School nurses	82	88	88	96	108
SCPHN – RPHN	2	3	2	2	2
Family nurses	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,026</b>	<b>1,059</b>	<b>1,068</b>	<b>1,120</b>	<b>1,146</b>

RPHN = Registered Public Health Nurse

Table 8

**Total number of special/recordable qualifications issued to professionals on the permanent register with an address in Northern Ireland, sorted from high to low**

	March 2017	March 2018	March 2019	March 2020	March 2021
Community practitioner nurse prescriber	1,437	1,499	1,534	1,560	1,582
SP – Adult nursing	1,159	1,181	1,205	1,235	1,281
Nurse independent / Supplementary prescriber	672	709	809	911	1,013
SP – District nursing	712	722	737	758	771
Lecturer / Practice educator	240	228	214	211	205
SP – Mental health	189	185	184	180	184
Teacher	174	185	186	184	183
SP – General practice nursing	130	126	119	115	109
SP – Community children’s nursing	87	92	91	94	99
SP – Community mental health nursing	42	43	42	41	42
SP – Community learning disabilities nursing	35	37	38	38	37
SP – Learning disability nurse	9	21	21	21	19
SP – Children’s nursing	5	5	5	5	5
Nurse independent prescriber	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,893</b>	<b>5,035</b>	<b>5,187</b>	<b>5,355</b>	<b>5,532</b>

SP = Specialist practitioner

# Covid-19 temporary register in Northern Ireland

In March 2020 we established a Covid-19 temporary register to support the UK's response to the coronavirus pandemic. We initially invited nurses and midwives who had left our permanent register within the last three years to join our Covid-19 temporary register.

In April 2020 we invited two further groups: overseas applicants, including nurses and midwives, who had completed all parts of their NMC registration process except their OSCE (objective structured clinical examination); nurses and midwives who had left the permanent register within the last four and five years.

In January 2021 we extended our invitation to a further group of overseas-trained nurses in the final stages of their application to join our permanent register. Since then we've also opened the Covid-19 temporary register up to those who left our permanent register more recently (currently before 30 April 2021).

**Table 9**

## **Total people on the Covid-19 temporary register with an address in Northern Ireland**

	31 March 2021
Nurse	327
Midwife	16
Nurse and midwife	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>347</b>

The number of people with an address in Northern Ireland make up 2.2 percent of the Covid-19 temporary register.

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