

The Nursing and Midwifery Council

Statistical analysis of the register

1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005

August 2005

Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Council is the regulatory body for nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses throughout the United Kingdom. Our principal function is to set and improve standards of education, conduct, performance and ethics for the professions we regulate.

The professional register lies at the heart of the Council's activity, which is focused on public protection. No-one may practise as a nurse or midwife in the UK without effective registration with the Council. Practitioners renew their registration every three years.

The aim of publishing a statistical analysis of the register is to assist workforce planners, researchers, government and employers in their several activities which depend on information about numbers on the register. There may also be public interest in the information.

The statistics provided in this report cover the year ending 31 March 2005. During the year, the new register came into effect. This has three parts – for nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses. Our annual statistics have, historically, been based on the previous 15-part register, reflecting registerable qualifications. As this information is still retained, these 15 parts are de-facto “sub-parts” for statistical purposes. We will continue to publish statistical information about those sub-parts for the foreseeable future. Our professional conduct statistics for the year are given in the annual report for professional conduct, which was published in November 2004.

Statistical trends

It is always a mistake to draw conclusions from a single year's statistics. That is why we show long-term runs of figures wherever possible. As a principle, therefore, the Council just publishes the statistics and lets others interpret them as they wish. We do not ascribe reasons for increases or falls, as there are rarely single or simple factors involved.

Overall, the highlights of this set of statistics are:

- A further increase in numbers on the register – now at its highest level ever
- Rising levels of UK-trained nurses and midwives coming onto the register in parallel with declining levels of overseas-trained nurses and midwives coming onto the register
- The continued long-term trend of a gradually ageing workforce

Further information

These statistics are also available on the NMC web site (www.nmc-uk.org). For further information, you should contact Stuart Skyte, Head of Communications, at stuart.skyte@nmc-uk.org.

Basic demographic information

This section provides basic demographic information on the register as at 31 March 2005. This includes age and gender breakdowns, geographical distribution, number and type of qualification.

Please note that one-third of practitioners hold more than one registerable or recordable qualification, and it is not possible to identify with any degree of certainty which ones they are using in their current practice. A common request made of the Council, for example, is to state how many mental health or children's nurses there are in the UK. While we can say how many have the relevant qualification, we do not know whether they are actually using it in their current employment.

Table 1: Numbers on the effective register

This section gives the total number on the register over the last 10 years, together with the number of initial registrations and numbers leaving the register. Numbers on the register are at the highest ever level.

Year ending 31 March	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Effective register as at 31 March each year	645,011	648,240	637,449	634,229	634,529	632,050	644,024	645,580	660,480	672,897
Change over previous Year	2,060	3,229	-10,791	-3,220	300	-2,479	11,974	1,556	14,900	12,417
Initial registration	19,632	17,984	16,382	17,954	21,418	25,123	30,693	31,775	34,617	33,257
Number of practitioners leaving the register	17,572	14,755	27,173	21,174	21,118	27,602	18,719	30,219	19,717	20,840
%age leaving the register	2.7	2.3	4.2	3.3	3.3	4.3	3.0	4.7	3.1	3.2

As can be seen above, we have shown for the first time the percentage of practitioners leaving the register each year. This percentage has been largely consistent over the last seven years with a couple of exceptions. It would seem, therefore, that there is a "norm" of between 3.0 and 3.5% wastage each year due to death, retirement and other departures from the register.

Table 2: Age distribution of the register

The following table gives an age breakdown of the register over the last decade. In 1995, over half of those on the register were under 40. Today, well over 60% of those on the register are over 40 and more than one in four is now over 50. The age breakdown also reflects the changing patterns in the student body, where there are many nursing and midwifery students who could be described as "mature" as opposed to school-leavers. Perhaps an ageing workforce is simply a reflection of new career patterns which commonly see people taking up new careers in their 30s and 40s.

Age range in year ending 31 March	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Under 25 years	4.07	3.61	3.17	2.98	2.90	2.12	2.24	2.10	2.02	1.94
25-29 years	12.79	11.77	10.93	10.32	9.88	7.30	8.86	8.54	8.44	8.29
30-39 years	36.40	36.14	35.71	34.84	33.68	31.31	30.63	29.37	28.30	27.35
40-49 years	26.15	26.66	27.55	28.56	29.58	32.22	32.32	33.26	33.94	34.42
50-54 years	9.43	10.30	10.96	11.28	11.55	12.82	11.46	11.46	11.62	11.91
Over 55 years	11.16	11.50	11.68	12.02	12.31	13.20	14.50	15.27	15.68	16.09

As can be seen from the above table, 62.4% of those on the register are over 40 years of age and 28% are over 50.

Table 3: Gender breakdown of the register

The proportion of men on the register broke the 10% "barrier" in 2001/2002, and has continued its long-term slow upward trend. The table below shows the gradual gender balance change on the register.

Year ending 31 March	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Percentage men	9.20	9.27	9.38	9.48	9.75	9.89	10.21	10.48	10.63	10.73
Percentage women	90.80	90.73	90.62	90.52	90.25	90.11	89.79	89.52	89.36	89.25

Table 4: Geographical breakdown of the register

In general, the geographical breakdown of the register has not greatly changed in recent years. The latest figures, for the year ending March 2005, are as follows:

Country	Number on register	%age of register
England	520,579	77.36
Northern Ireland	21,814	3.24
Scotland	64,915	9.65
Wales	32,082	4.77
Overseas address	31,310	4.65
No known postcode, etc	2,197	0.33

The table below provides a partial breakdown of those on the NMC register who are currently living and working abroad. Countries with the largest number of UK registrants in residence are as follows:

Country	Number
Australia	5,415
Ireland	4,472
South Africa	2,197
USA	2,076
New Zealand	1,971
Channel Islands	1,484
Canada	961
Isle of Man	852
Hong Kong	796

Table 5: Numbers on the register by part and gender: Specialist Community Public Health Nurses

This is the first year of the new register. The three-part register came into effect on 1 August 2004. At that time, health visitors were automatically transferred to the specialist community public health part of the register. Subsequently, they were joined by family health nurses (Scotland), school nurses and occupational health nurses with a specialist practice qualification. This part of the register is dynamic but, at 31 March 2005, the breakdown of the specialist community public health nurse part of the register was as follows:

	Female	%age	Male	%age	Total
Family health nurses (Scotland)	28	100.0			28
Health visitors	24,498	98.5	376	1.5	24,874
Occupational health nurses	3,273	92.8	253	7.2	3,526
School nurses	851	99.8	2	0.2	853
Total	28,650	97.8	631	2.2	29,281

Table 6: Numbers on the register by “sub-part” of the register and gender

The following table shows the number of registrants on each “sub-part” of the register for the year ending 31 March 2005; the “sub-parts” of the register are shown at Appendix 1. Numbers are additionally broken down by gender. Please note that, where a practitioner holds more than one registerable qualification, he or she will be counted more than once in the table. Thus, the total is well in excess of the number of individuals on the register. The information can be used to show, for example, how many nurses have a learning disability qualification, but not how many of them work currently with clients with a learning disability.

Part of the Register	Female	%age	Male	%age	Total
Part 1	374,090	92.5	30,214	7.5	404,304
Part 2	88,958	95.9	3,827	4.1	92,785
Part 3	37,335	62.8	22,117	37.2	59,452
Part 4	8,370	71.6	3,327	28.4	11,697
Part 5	9,972	67.2	4,875	32.8	14,847
Part 6	3,058	72.0	1,187	28.0	4,245
Part 7	17,244	91.5	1,605	8.5	18,849
Part 8	20,825	97.0	641	3.0	21,466
Part 9	367	98.7	5	1.3	372
Part 10	42,906	99.6	158	0.4	43,064
Part 11	24,498	98.5	376	1.5	24,874
Part 12	96,903	90.4	10,273	9.6	107,176
Part 13	18,170	68.2	8,480	31.8	26,650
Part 14	4,298	78.0	1,214	22.0	5,512
Part 15	16,731	95.0	873	5.0	17,604
Total	763,725	89.5	89,172	10.5	852,897

Table 7: Numbers in each branch of nursing

By moving the above figures around and ordering them by branch of nursing, we are able to provide the following statistics showing numbers qualified to practise – which will be more than those actually practising:

Nursing branch	Total number
Nursing	784,959
of which:	
Adult/general nursing	623,486
Mental health nursing	97,799
Learning disability nursing	24,604
Children's nursing	39,070

Table 8: Registered qualifications held on the effective register

The following tables provide a breakdown of the numbers on parts of the register, reflecting the fact that three-quarters of practitioners are on one part only:

Numbers of entries	Number of practitioners	Percentage
1	503,728	74.9
2	154,693	23.0
3	13,821	2.1
4	626	0.1
5	29	
6	6	
7	1	

(The total comes to 672,904 rather than the 672,897 on the register. It is unclear why this is the case.)

Table 9: A breakdown of those holding one registered qualification

Entry on:	Number	Percentage
Part 1	261,613	53.3
Part 2	27,124	6.1
Part 3	28,956	6.0
Part 4	3,183	0.7
Part 5	8,245	1.8
Part 6	1,499	0.3
Part 7	7,044	1.6
Part 8	1,848	0.4
Part 9	71	--
Part 10	20,758	4.1
Part 12	100,038	18.0
Part 13	24,581	4.4
Part 14	5,088	0.9
Part 15	13,676	2.4
Total	503,724*	100.0

*The difference between the above total and that in the previous table relates to the fact that four people are shown to have a part 11 (health visitor) qualification only.

Taken together with the table 6, this table shows how many nurses who have a second level qualification have converted to a part one qualification, and therefore how many nurses remain on the register with a second level qualification only. The second level “sub-parts” of the register are parts 2, 4, 6 and 7. The Table 6 shows there are 127,576 people on the register with a second level qualification. Table 9 shows that only 38,850 of them have that qualification alone. This number has declined by 43% over the last five years

In general, any increases in numbers on “sub-part” 1 reflects the number of overseas-trained nurses coming onto the register, while rising numbers on “sub-parts” 12 to 15 reflect UK-trained nurses coming onto the register.

Table 10: Nursing and midwifery prescribing

Nurses and midwives are able to achieve qualifications that enable them to prescribe medicines. The following table sets out numbers of registrants qualifying as a nurse or midwife prescriber in 2004/2005 and the total number able to prescribe at the end of the year:

Type of prescriber qualification	New in 2004/2005	Total on the register
V100: Independent nurse or midwife prescribers	1,778	31,914
V200: Extended nurse or midwife prescribers	111	1,618
V300: Supplementary nurse or midwife prescribers	2,575	4,151
Total nurse prescribers	4,464	37,683

Table 11: Admissions to the register by country/area

The following table shows admissions to the register by country/area, and by initial and subsequent entrants in the year to 31 March 2005:

Country/area	Initial entrants	Subsequent entrants*
England	16,146	2,513
Scotland	2,263	475
Wales	1,159	245
Northern Ireland	414	146
European Economic Area	1,193	46
Overseas	11,477	243
Not known (UK)**	605	172
Total	33,257	3,840

* Subsequent entries are those where the person is already on the register and achieves a further qualification, thus allowing them to enter a different part of the register.

** These are the last UK admissions using the former National Board system. A change to the computerised registration system means that these applicants cannot be allocated a UK country of training. This has inevitably reduced artificially the numbers reported for each of the UK countries.

Table 12: Initial admissions to the register by part of the register and country

This table provides a breakdown of initial admissions to the register by part of the register and by UK country, the European Economic Area and overseas:

Part of the register	England	Scotland	Wales	N Ireland	EEA	Overseas	Unknown	Total
1	5	-	-	-	1,016	11,021	3	12,045
2	4	-	2	-	7	-	-	13
3	43	-	-	-	51	414	12	520
4	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
5	-	-	-	-	14	1	-	15
6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	-	-	-	-	28	19	-	47
10	833	145	10	-	74	22	16	1,100
12	10,466	1,589	868	367	-	-	419	13,709
13	2,708	335	128	16	-	-	105	3,292
14	526	27	21	-	-	-	11	585
15	1,561	167	130	31	-	-	39	1,928
Total	16,146	2,263	1,159	414	1,193	11,477	605	33,257

Table 13: Initial (UK) admissions to the register by UK country over time

This table shows the change in numbers coming onto the register from UK training over a longer time span. It reflects the way that the number of nursing and midwifery places was reduced in the early to mid 1990s but then increased again from 1997 onwards. There is, of course, a minimum three-year time lag between a cutback or increase and the resulting change.

Country	1991	1993	1995	1998	2000	2002	2004	2005
England	14,786	13,931	13,997	9,416	11,048	11,712	15,862	16,146
Scotland	2,537	2,485	2,060	1,688	1,909	1,786	2,331	2,263
Wales	998	936	769	541	715	647	812	1,159
Northern Ireland	659	717	585	437	363	393	457	414

Table 14: Initial (overseas) admissions to the register by country

This table shows seven years of overseas registration statistics for the “top 25” source countries for nurses and midwives being admitted to the register. This table does not include nurses and midwives trained within the European Union.

Country	1998/99	1999/2000	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
India	30	96	289	994	1830	3073	3690
Philippines	52	1052	3396	7235	5593	4338	2521
Australia	1335	1209	1046	1342	920	1326	981
South Africa	599	1460	1086	2114	1368	1689	933
Nigeria	179	208	347	432	509	511	466
West Indies	221	425	261	248	208	397	352
Zimbabwe	52	221	382	473	485	391	311
New Zealand	527	461	393	443	282	348	289
Ghana	40	74	140	195	251	354	272
Pakistan	3	13	44	207	172	140	205
Zambia	15	40	88	183	133	169	162
USA	139	168	147	122	88	141	105
Mauritius	6	15	41	62	59	95	102
Kenya	19	29	50	155	152	146	99
Botswana	4	-	87	100	39	90	91
Canada	196	130	89	79	52	89	88
Nepal					71	43	73
Swaziland						81	69
China							60
Malawi	1	15	45	75	57	64	52
Sri Lanka					23	36	47
Lesotho						50	43
Japan					20	37	34
Singapore							28
Sierra Leone							24
Others	203	329	472	605	418	514	380
TOTAL ALL OVERSEAS	3,621	5,945	8,403	15,064	12,730	14,122	11,477

As can be seen from the above table, India has become the number one source country after a run of four years which saw the Philippines in that role. Overall, the last year has seen a 28% fall in admissions from countries in central and southern Africa and a 22% rise in admissions from the Indian sub-continent. As can be seen from Table 12 above, only 22 of the 11,477 new overseas-trained registrants in 2004/2005 were midwives. The NMC does not currently admit midwives from any of the top three countries shown in Table 14.

Table 15: Initial admissions to the register from the EU accession countries

The year 2004-2005 saw 10 countries accede to the European Union (1 May 2004). At the time, many forecasters predicted large numbers of migrants from the accession countries. The actual figures for the 8 countries from which practitioners were admitted in the 11 months in question are as follows:

Country	Admissions
Poland	133
Czech Republic	23
Hungary	22
Slovakia	22
Lithuania	17
Malta	7
Estonia	5
Cyprus	2
Latvia	0
Slovenia	0
Total	231

Table 16: Number of decisions made on overseas applications

The continuing high volumes of applications from overseas-trained nurses and midwives for UK registration is reflected in the number of decisions made in the year ending 31 March 2005. Each application is considered as an individual case as people's education and work experience is not uniform. Almost all the acceptance decisions will have been made following an applicant's successful completion of a clinical placement.

Not all those approved to join the register actually enter the register by the end of the year in which they are accepted.

The following table shows the number of different decisions actually taken in the year. As can be seen, there are subtle differences between the types of decision.

<u>Type of decision</u>	<u>Number</u>
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Applicant must take English language test, a UK placement in a specific clinical setting and an area of training	72
Applicant must take English language test and training in a specific clinical area	6
Applicant must take English language test	71
Applicant must take English language test and a UK placement in a specific clinical setting	521
Applicant must undertake a placement in a specific clinical setting and an area of training	13
Applicant must take overseas placement in a specific clinical setting	56
Applicant must undertake a UK placement in a specific clinical setting	330
Applicant must undertake training in a specific area	173
Applicant must undertake a 3-6 six months UK clinical placement and specific areas of training	71
Applicant must undertake a 6-month UK clinical placement and specific areas of training	13
Applicant must undertake midwifery education and assessment	13
Applicant must undertake a 6-month UK clinical placement	8,329
Applicant must undertake a 3-6 months UK clinical placement	14,547
Application is rejected	1,270
Application is accepted	11,578
Total number of decisions taken in the year	37,063

Table 17: Number of UK registrants “going abroad” in the year to 31 March 2005

While the following statistics reflect the number of checks by overseas regulators that a practitioner is on the NMC register (ie a verification), rather than the actual numbers going overseas to practise, it is unlikely that these figures overstate the number going abroad by a great deal. Numbers tend to reflect the recruitment drives of other countries.

Country	Number of verifications	Percentage
Australia	3,296	41.0
USA	1,729	21.5
New Zealand	1,097	13.6
Irish Republic	847	10.5
Canada	461	5.7
Spain	124	1.5
France	87	1.1
Saudi Arabia	28	0.4
Other	375	4.7
Total	8,044	100.0

Table 18: Long term verification trends

The following table shows verification figures over the last 10 years, indicating the trends in the external migration of nurses and midwives from the UK:

Country/bloc	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04	04/05
Africa	127	93	39	30	92	50	40	29	32	46
Australia	1,215	1,102	1,329	1,504	1,661	1,859	1,973	2,602	2,708	3,296
Canada	150	143	143	189	262	474	490	452	376	461
EEA	510	1,232	544	719	827	600	1,057	1,622	1,294	1,284
New Zealand	693	720	549	478	630	655	753	958	980	1,097
USA	197	281	320	288	319	472	1,089	2,224	2,082	1,729
Others	715	473	476	622	1,292	546	854	192	138	131
Total	3,607	4,044	3,400	3,830	5,083	4,656	6,256	8,079	7,610	8,044

The last three years have seen a consistency in numbers of verifications. Within the overall total, there are two points of note: The first is that, while Australia has always been the most popular destination for UK-registered practitioners going abroad, there is clearly a strong long-term rising trend in verifications for that country. The second is that the predicted sharp increase in recruiting to the USA appears to have quickly plateau-ed.

Midwifery statistics

Table 19: Number of midwives with an effective registration

As can be seen from Table 6, in which midwives are on part 10 of the register, there were 43,064 midwives with an effective registration at the end of March 2005. Of these, 42,906 were female and 158 were male. However, and for whatever reason, not all of these midwives were practising as midwives during the year 2004-2005. But they could, if they choose to, resume practice as a midwife as their registration is current, providing they submit notice of their intention to practise to a local supervising authority.

Table 20: Number of midwives who submitted Intention to Practise forms during the year

The following table shows the number of individual midwives who submitted an Intention to Practise form (ITP) to one or more Local Supervising Authority during the year; a gender breakdown is shown at the same time:

Women	Men	Not recorded	Total
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Number submitting ITP forms	32,629	115	1	32,745
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The last eight years have seen a broadly stable number of midwives on the register who have submitted ITP forms.

Year ending 31 March Midwives submitting ITP forms

1992	34,626
1993	35,013
1994	35,127
1995	35,309
1996	35,230
1997	34,408
1998	33,138
1999	32,803
2000	33,897
2001	33,291
2002	33,165
2003	not available
2004	33,687
2005	32,745

As midwives may (and do) work in more than one LSA area at any one time, the number of ITP forms submitted is considerably greater than the number of midwives actually submitting them. During the year in question, the number of ITP forms submitted totalled 36,652.

Table 21: Number of midwives by UK country

The following table gives a breakdown of the number of midwives submitting ITP forms by country within the UK. The table also shows the number of midwives on the register with an overseas address:

Country	Women	Men	Total
England	26,049	101	26,150
Northern Ireland	1,273	-	1,273
Scotland	3,306	4	3,310
Wales	1,592	1	1,593
UK total	32,220	106	32,326
Overseas	263		263 (From 2005/2006, the NMC no longer accepts ITPs from overseas.)
No postcode	155	1	156
Overall total			32,745

Table 22: Age breakdown of midwives

The following table shows the age breakdown of midwives on the register together with the age breakdown of the entire register. This shows a slightly larger proportion of midwives under 50 (74%) than is the case for the register as a whole (72%). However, it also shows a smaller proportion under 30 (7.5%) than for the register as a whole (10.2%).

Age range	Midwives	Total register
<25	1.39	1.94
25-29	6.15	8.29
30-39	24.05	27.35
40-49	42.61	34.42
50-54	12.59	11.91
>55	13.21	16.09

Table 23: Number of midwives per supervisor (year ending 31 March each year)

The statistics below show the number of practising midwives per supervisor per country, and in the UK as a whole, over the last decade. The NMC standard for the number of midwives per supervisor is 15:1, which would enable supervisors to supervise midwifery practice more effectively.

Year	England	N Ireland	Scotland	Wales	UK
1995	36	68	51	41	38
1996	32	62	39	39	34
1997	23	46	25	17	23
1998	21	37	23	18	22
1999	22	39	32	17	23
2000	18	33	23	18	19
2001	18	30	21	19	19
2002	17	31	20	19	18
2003	not available				
2004	18	27	21	18	20
2005	14	21	16	15	15.5

Table 24: Analysis of part-time and full-time working in midwifery

The long-term trend has seen a shift away from full-time working in midwifery towards part-time working. What is unknown is whether this reflects a reduction in the overall person-hours of midwifery time available or, instead, that midwives have a number of part-time midwifery jobs.

Year	Full-time	Percentage	Part-time	Percentage	Total
1994	20,889	59.5	14,238	40.5	35,127
1995	20,790	58.9	14,519	41.1	35,309
1996	20,119	57.1	15,111	42.9	35,230
1997	19,346	56.2	15,062	43.8	34,408
1998	18,241	53.6	15,796	46.4	34,037
1999	17,396	51.9	16,127	48.1	33,523
2000	17,770	51.6	16,668	48.4	34,438
2001	16,596	49.0	17,256	51.0	33,852
2002	16,450	48.3	17,605	51.7	34,055
2003	not available				
2004	12,999	38.6	20,688	61.4	33,687
2005	14,960	45.7	17,785	54.3	32,745

Looking at the latest figures, which are very much in line with the long-term trend but out of kilter with the previous year's figures, it may be that the figures for 2004 were somehow distorted. The position will be clearer in a year's time when we have a further set of figures.

Appendix 1

The “sub-parts” of the register as at 31 March 2005

The register has only had three parts since 1 August 2005: Nurses, Midwives and Specialist Community Public Health Nurses. However, many of the statistics included in this report are based on the qualifications recorded on the register. These effectively divide into “sub-parts”, which were the old parts of the register. For purposes of analysis, the “sub-parts” are:

Part	Description
1	First level nurses trained in general nursing
2	Second level nurses trained in general nursing (England and Wales)
3	First level nurses – mental illness
4	Second level nurses – mental illness (England and Wales)
5	First level nurses – learning disabilities
6	Second level nurses – learning disabilities (England and Wales)
7	Second level nurses (Scotland and Northern Ireland)
8	Nurses – children
9	Fever nurses
10	Midwives
11	Health visitors
12	First level nurses – adult nursing }
13	First level nurses – mental health }
14	First level nurses – learning disabilities }
15	First level nurses – children }

Project 2000 courses