

# The NMC register

1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022



## About us

Our vision is safe, effective and kind nursing and midwifery that improves everyone's health and wellbeing. As the independent regulator of more than 758,000 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 educational 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 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.



# Foreword from the Chief Executive and Registrar

**Welcome to the NMC's annual registration data report. In this document, in the four country reports and in our leavers' survey you will find a wealth of information about the numbers of nurses and midwives eligible to practise across the UK, and nursing associates in England, their different characteristics and why they leave.**

The statistics here are all important but there are two things I want to emphasise. Behind every PIN number on the register is a dedicated professional, skilled and capable of delivering safe, kind and effective care. I pay tribute to the work they do and the difference they make to people's lives every day of the year.

But I also know, they are working under huge pressure as the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic continue to have an impact on demand for health and social care services and on everyone working in those services. The information in this report provides valuable insight into the nursing and midwifery workforce, and can be used by governments, health and care leaders, employers and our registrants themselves to shape a future that enables nurses, midwives and nursing associates to provide the high quality care the public has every right to expect.

## The big headline

On 31 March 2022, there were 758,303 professionals on our register. That's 26,403 more than there were a year earlier and is the highest level it has ever been. It's good news that despite all of the pressures of the last two years, the register has continued to grow. The number of registered nurses has risen to almost 705,000, and the number of midwives has passed 40,000. We're edging closer to 7,000 nursing associates, and there are a similar number of dual registrants – people registered as both a nurse and midwife.

## Significant rise in internationally trained joiners

What has driven that encouraging increase? A significant factor is the big rise in internationally trained joiners. Of 48,436 first-time joiners, almost half (48 percent) had trained overseas. And of those people, 66 percent had trained in India or the Philippines. This means growth of the UK nursing and midwifery workforce has become more reliant than ever on internationally trained professionals joining our register. In fact Figure 1 (page 10) shows there's only been a marginal rise in the number of joiners who trained in the UK, compared to last year.

Internationally trained joiners make a vital and welcome contribution to our nation's health and wellbeing. But we cannot take them for granted.

Two years ago, we felt the pandemic's impact on global travel; the number of international joiners to our register fell sharply – almost to zero at one point during the summer of 2020. A future pandemic or other global disruption could see history repeat itself, but with an even bigger impact on the overall growth of the register.

We also need to make sure that we are supporting, valuing and rewarding our internationally trained joiners so their careers can thrive in the UK. It's up to all of us involved in international recruitment to make sure their experience is a positive one.

## Leavers also up – here's why

What about people leaving the register? After four years of steady and welcome decline, the number of professionals leaving our register has now increased, as you'll see in Table 3 (page 8). Each year we ask a sample of leavers to tell us why they left, and this time 6,500 people responded.

As you might expect, retirement and a change in personal circumstances are always the most common reasons. But our latest report confirms the third most common reason was too much pressure, with stress and poor mental health being factors in many people's decision to stop practising. Midwives were the most likely to cite this reason, closely followed by mental health nurses.

Then there were those who said their workplace culture was having a negative effect on them – again, enough of an effect that it was part of their decision to stop.

Notably, our latest survey is the first time all respondents left the register during the Covid-19 pandemic. And more than a third (37 percent) said the pandemic influenced their decision to leave.

You'll find a summary of the leavers' survey report starting on page 26, along with a link to the full report. It's full of fascinating data but I think it's the comments from respondents that are particularly illuminating.

## Covid-19 temporary register

We set up the temporary register in March 2020, to support rapid workforce expansion during the pandemic. I'd like to take this opportunity to reiterate my sincere thanks, on behalf of the NMC, for the dedication and commitment of everyone who came forward.

The data starting on page 33 confirms there were 14,952 nurses and midwives on the temporary register at the end of March. And there were another 5,982 people who moved across to the permanent register over the past two years.

We've received confirmation from the UK Government that our temporary register will close on 30 September 2022. We'll support more eligible professionals to move onto our permanent register over the coming months, if they want to keep practising.

## What all this means

The headline news that there's more than three quarters of a million people on our register paints a positive picture. But there are warning signs beneath the rosier surface.

We need to pay attention to the relatively slow pace of domestic growth, the increase in the total number of leavers and the reasons why they left. A focus on retention as well as attracting new recruits needs to be part of a sustainable workforce plan that supports the growth in the nursing and midwifery workforce we need to meet rising demands for health and care services.

I very much hope that the information in these reports will help health and care services in all four UK countries achieve that for the benefit of the professionals on our register and the public they serve.

Best wishes,

**Andrea Sutcliffe**

Chief Executive and Registrar



# About our register

**We keep the permanent 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 permanent register every six months. Our [previous report](#) was a mid-year update that we published in November 2021.**

## 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.

People who joined our register in 2021–2022 joined through different processes, depending on whether they were from the UK, the EU/EEA or outside the EU/EEA. Now that the UK has left the EU/EEA, everyone starting an application to join our register from outside the UK follows the same international process.<sup>1</sup>

Where we say 'country of initial registration' we mean that the data refers to where people first held professional registration as a nurse, midwife or nursing associate. Where we say 'country of training' we mean that the data refers to where people trained rather than where they first held professional registration.

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.

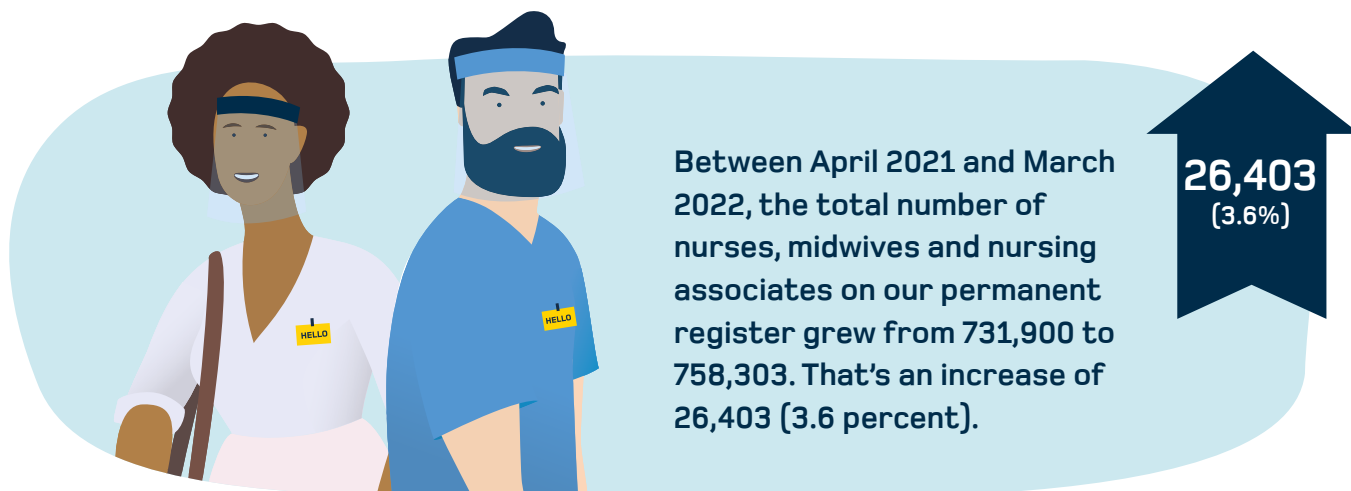
Our permanent register changes every day and can vary considerably from the start of the month to the end of the month. Therefore, our data only offers a snapshot in time. This report gives a snapshot of our register on 31 March 2022.

We continually review the quality and content of our data and information. When improved data or additional information becomes 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. For the most accurate data about the previous five years, always refer to the latest published report.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the terms of UK Government legislation, anyone who had submitted a viable application to the NMC before 31 December 2020, remains eligible to complete the application within two years.

# Size of our permanent register on 31 March 2022



**Table 1**  
**Total number of people on the permanent register by registration type**

| Registration type                   | March 2018     | March 2019     | March 2020     | March 2021     | March 2022     |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Nurse                               | 646,632        | 653,543        | 669,848        | 681,525        | 704,520        |
| Midwife                             | 35,830         | 36,916         | 37,918         | 39,070         | 40,165         |
| Dual registrant (nurse and midwife) | 7,811          | 7,288          | 7,142          | 6,968          | 6,744          |
| Nursing associate                   | n/a            | 489            | 1,685          | 4,337          | 6,874          |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>690,273</b> | <b>698,236</b> | <b>716,593</b> | <b>731,900</b> | <b>758,303</b> |

The nursing associate role was introduced in 2019, in England only. Nursing associates bridge the gap between health and care assistants, and registered nurses.

The number of people joining our register for the first time increased in the last year. Specifically, the number of nurses joining rose significantly. However, 2021–2022 also saw the number of people leaving our register increase annually for the first time in several years. The combination of factors behind this includes retirement, personal circumstances, increased pressure, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. More detail can be found in our [Leavers' survey](#).

**Table 2**

**Total number of people joining the permanent register for the first time by registration type**

| Registration type                   | March 2018    | March 2019    | March 2020    | March 2021    | March 2022    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Nurse                               | 23,363        | 28,017        | 34,912        | 29,589        | 43,417        |
| Midwife                             | 2,089         | 2,114         | 2,201         | 2,211         | 2,268         |
| Dual registrant (nurse and midwife) | 2             | 0             | 0             | 1             | 0             |
| Nursing associate                   | n/a           | 489           | 1,204         | 2,716         | 2,751         |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>25,454</b> | <b>30,620</b> | <b>38,317</b> | <b>34,517</b> | <b>48,436</b> |

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 12 months. Therefore, these figures won't add up exactly.

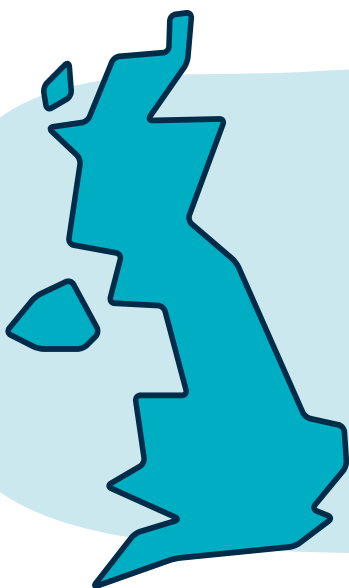
**Table 3**

**Total number of people leaving the permanent register by registration type**

| Registration type                   | March 2018    | March 2019    | March 2020    | March 2021    | March 2022    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Nurse                               | 29,495        | 27,195        | 23,755        | 22,342        | 25,219        |
| Midwife                             | 1,527         | 1,587         | 1,439         | 1,334         | 1,474         |
| Dual registrant (nurse and midwife) | 389           | 351           | 286           | 215           | 306           |
| Nursing associate                   | n/a           | 0             | 8             | 43            | 134           |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>31,411</b> | <b>29,133</b> | <b>25,488</b> | <b>23,934</b> | <b>27,133</b> |

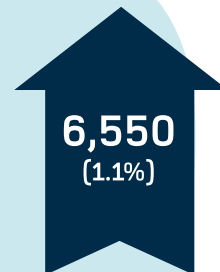


# Professionals from the UK



The number of professionals on our permanent register whose initial registration was in the UK grew from 609,310 to 615,860.

There are 3,043 more nurses, 2,531 more nursing associates, and 1,136 more midwives from the UK. There are 160 fewer dual registrants.



**Table 4**  
**People on our permanent register whose initial registration was in the UK**

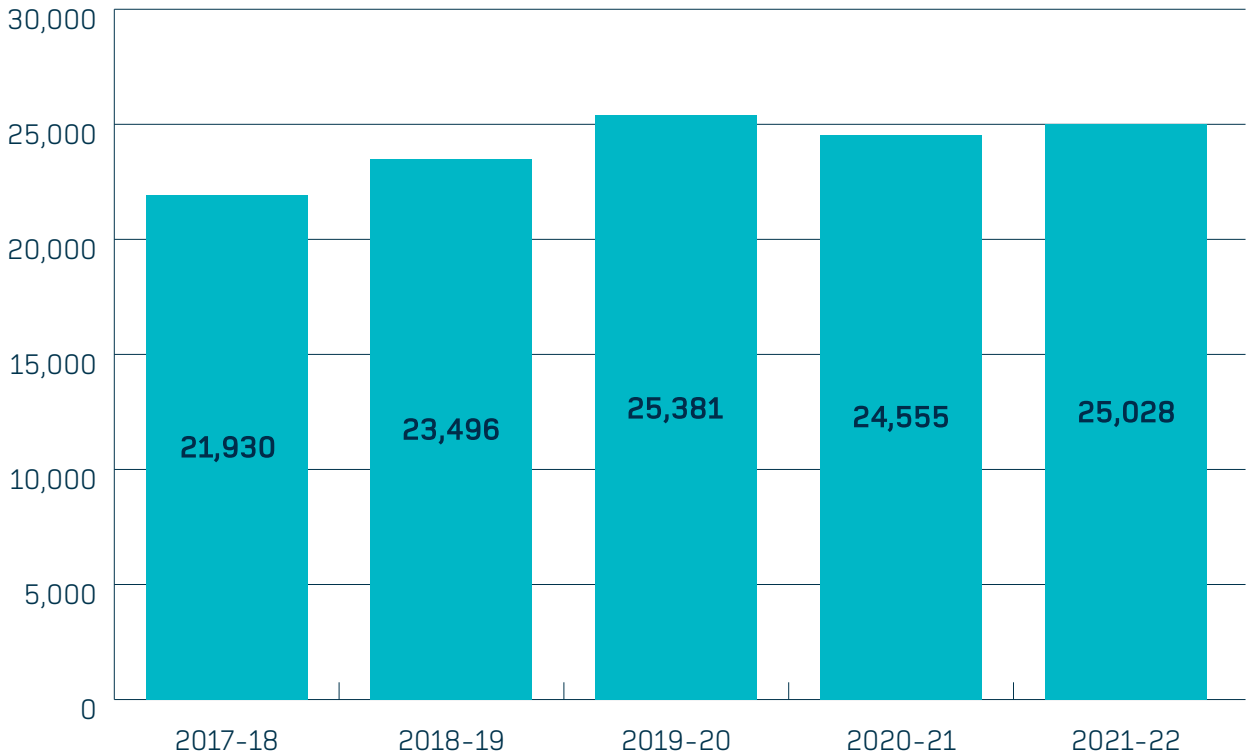
| Nurses, midwives and nursing associates |         |
|---|---------|
| March 2018                              | 586,724 |
| March 2019                              | 591,893 |
| March 2020                              | 600,905 |
| March 2021                              | 609,310 |
| March 2022                              | 615,860 |



## People from the UK joining the permanent register

Between April 2021 and March 2022, 25,028 people from the UK joined our permanent register. This is a 1.9 percent increase, or 473 more people, following a slight decline of 3.3 percent last year.

**Figure 1**  
**People from the UK joining the permanent register for the first time**



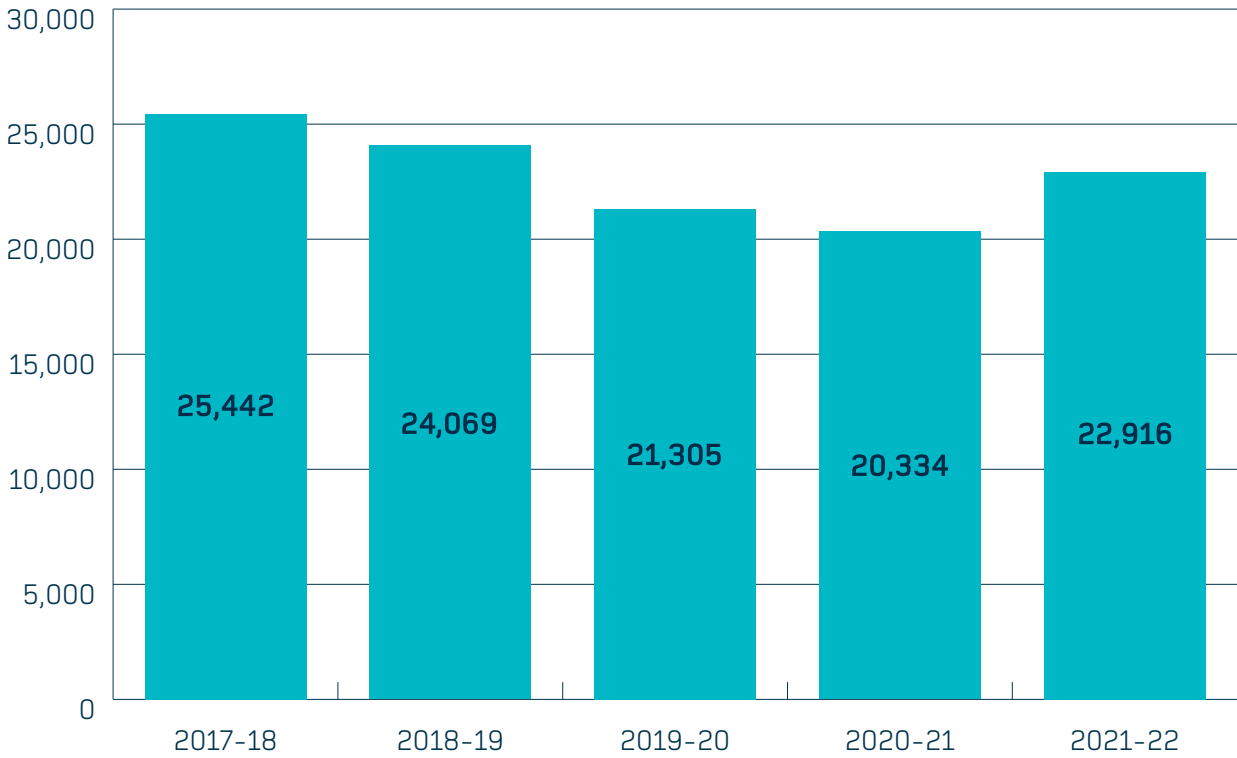
Joiners' data doesn't include those re-joining the register having previously left. Also, the overall number on the register is from one point in time, whereas the joiners' and leavers' data are the sum of activity over 12 months. Therefore, these figures won't add up exactly.



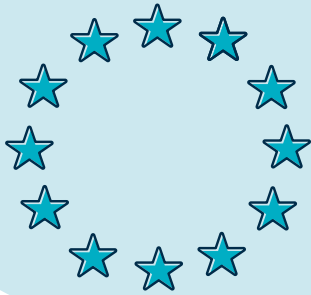
## People from the UK leaving the permanent register

The number of people from the UK leaving the permanent register started to increase after a steady fall over previous years. In 2021–2022, 22,916 people left our register. That's 2,582 (12.7 percent) more than the previous year.

**Figure 2**  
**People from the UK who left the permanent register**



# Professionals from the EU/EEA



The number of people from the EU/EEA on our permanent register has decreased over the past five years. The rate of this decline has slightly increased from last year.

In 2021–2022 the total number of people on our permanent register was 28,864.

**1,467**  
(4.8%)

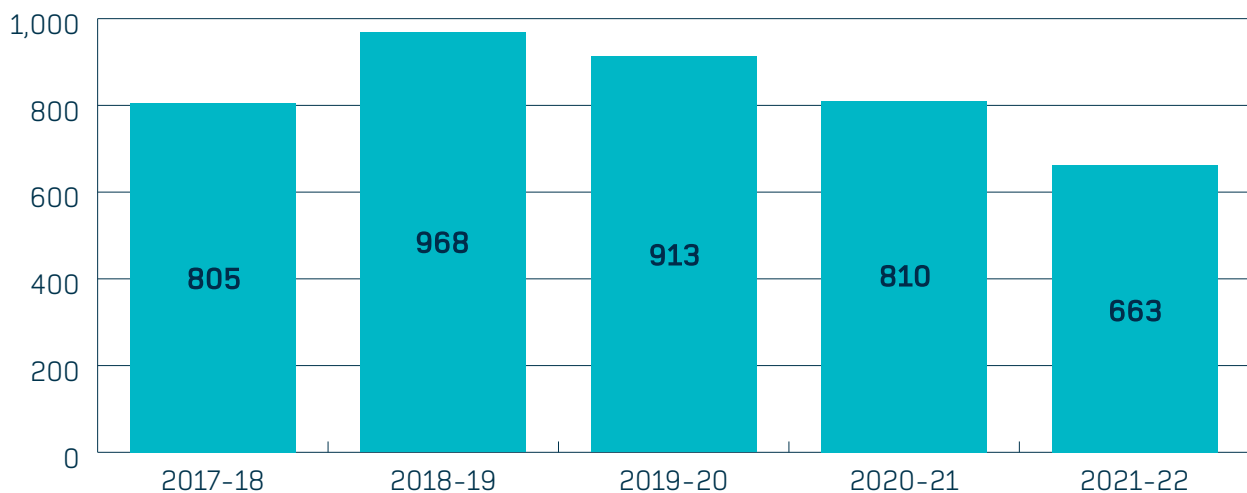
**Table 5**

## People on our permanent register whose initial registration was in the EU/EEA

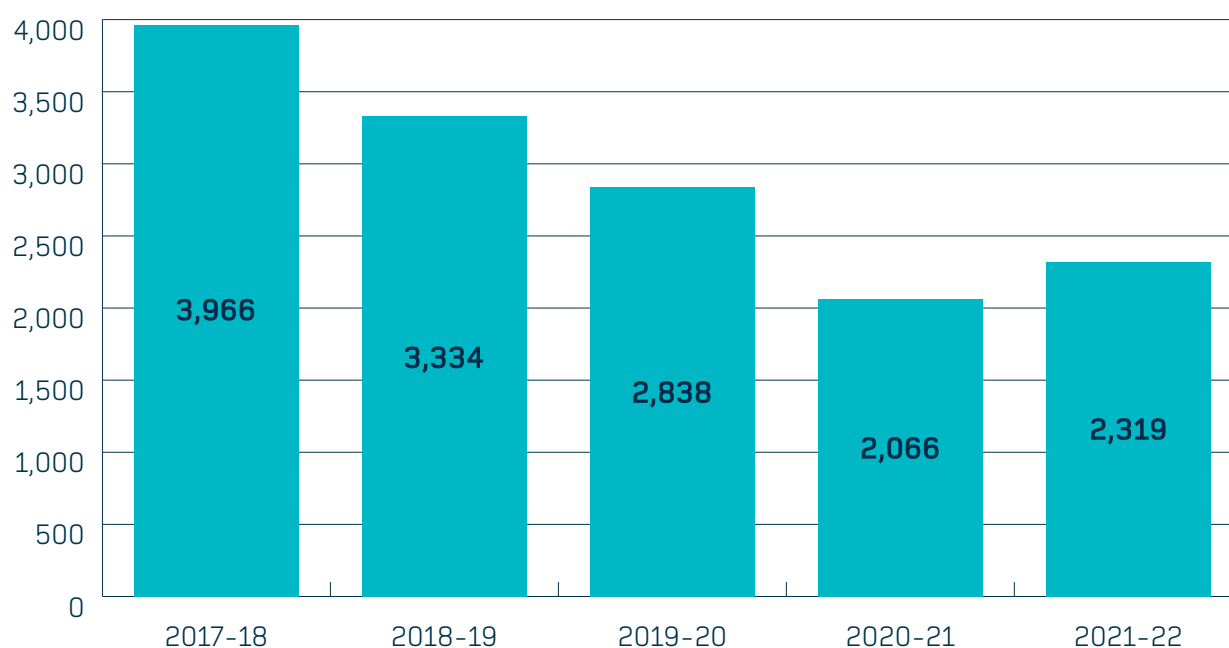
| Nurses, midwives and nursing associates |        |
|---|--------|
| 2021–2022                               | 28,864 |
| 2020–2021                               | 30,331 |
| 2019–2020                               | 31,385 |
| 2018–2019                               | 33,035 |
| 2017–2018                               | 35,115 |

**Figure 3**

## People from the EU/EEA 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.

**Figure 4****People from the EU/EEA who left the permanent register****Countries of training**

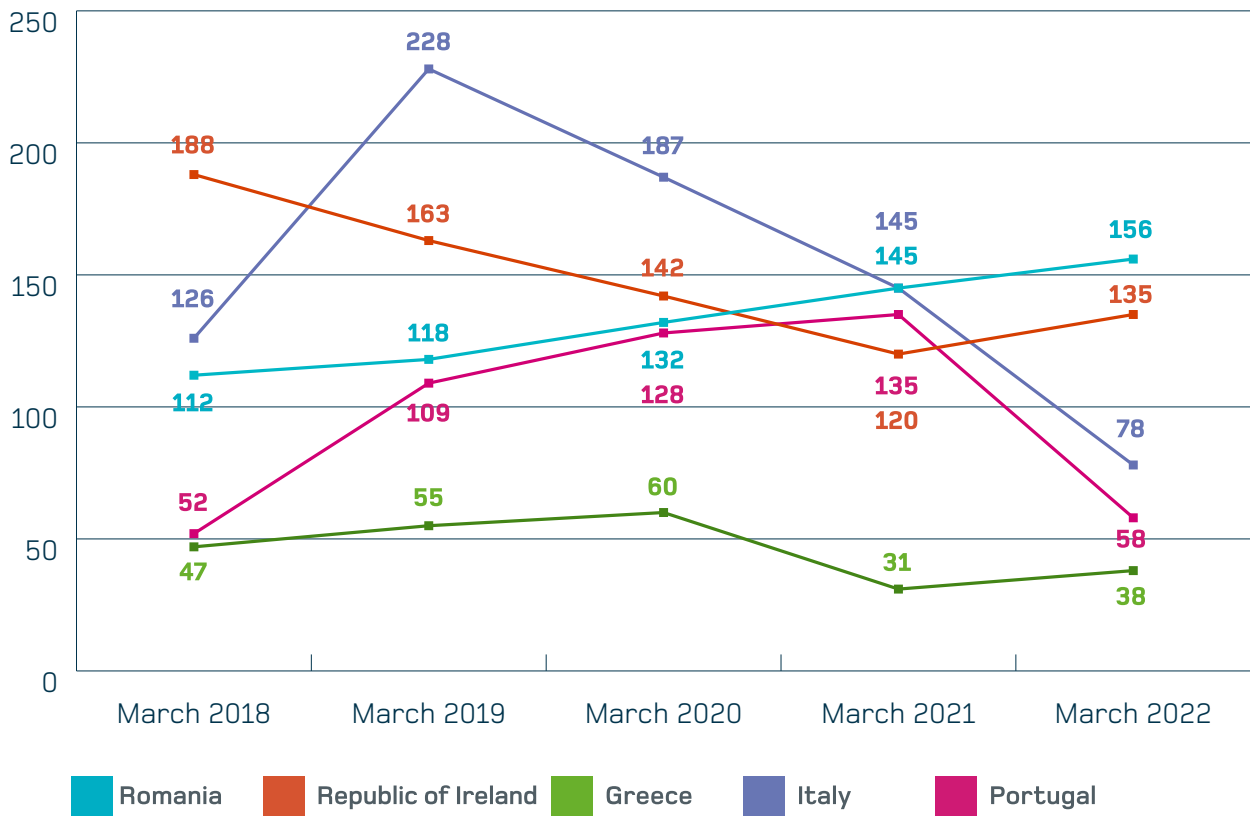
The number of professionals on our permanent register from each of the top five EU/EEA countries of training continues to fall steadily since 2016-2017. Spanish trained professionals have fallen by 3,031 since 2018, a reduction of 48 percent. Figure 5 shows that Greece has replaced Spain as one of the top five countries of training in the EU/EEA for people joining the register for the first time. There has been a continuing decline over the last five years in the number of leavers from most EU/EEA countries.

**Table 6****People on the permanent register by country of training in the EU/EEA (top five countries)**

|                 | March 2018 | March 2019 | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Romania</b>  | 7,720      | 7,545      | 7,459      | 7,477      | 7,388      |
| <b>Portugal</b> | 4,884      | 4,673      | 4,497      | 4,374      | 4,157      |
| <b>Italy</b>    | 4,546      | 4,172      | 3,918      | 3,735      | 3,407      |
| <b>Spain</b>    | 6,261      | 5,327      | 4,464      | 3,843      | 3,230      |
| <b>Poland</b>   | 2,858      | 2,746      | 2,650      | 2,600      | 2,547      |

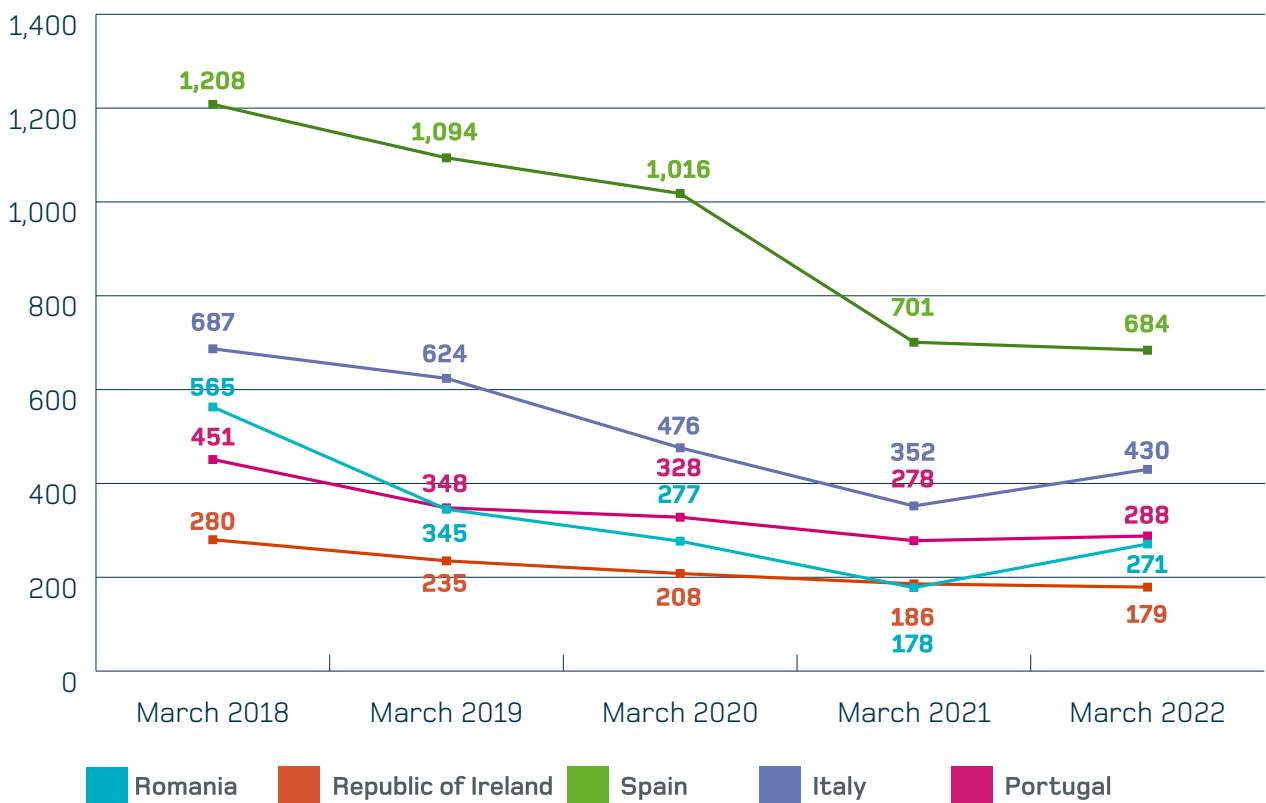
**Figure 5**

**People joining the permanent register for the first time by country of training in the EU/EEA (top five countries)**



**Figure 6**

**People leaving the permanent register by country of training in the EU/EEA (top five countries)**



# Professionals from outside the EU/EEA



The number of people from outside the EU/EEA on our permanent register rose significantly this year from 92,259 to 113,579. This is a 23.1 percent increase compared to a 9.4 percent increase last year.

This growth was driven by a big increase in the number of non-EU/EEA trained professionals joining the register for the first time, with only a small rise in the number leaving.

**21,320**  
(23.1%)

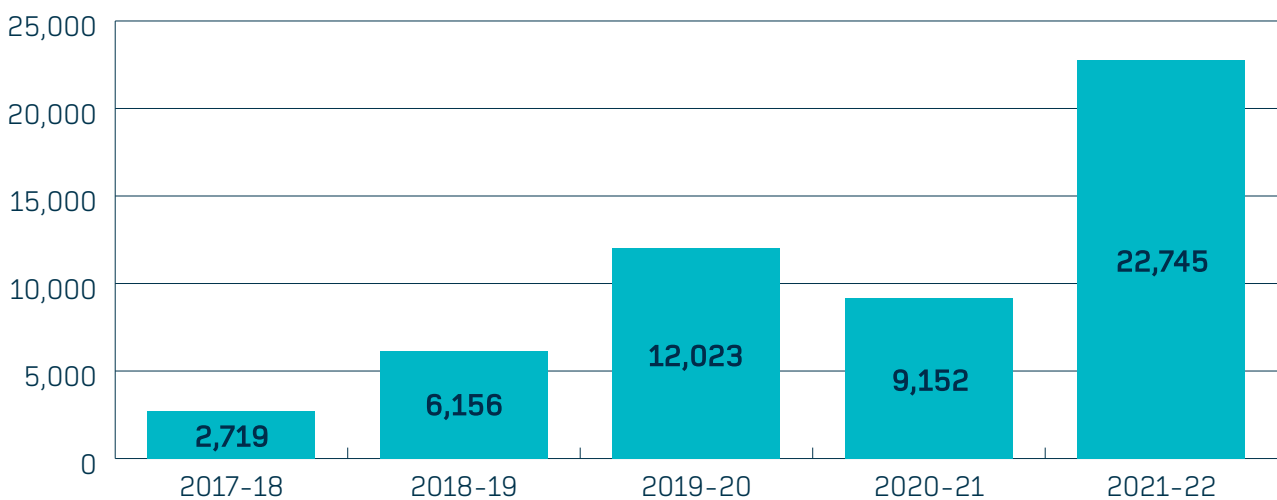
**Table 7**

## People on our permanent register whose initial registration was outside the EU/EEA

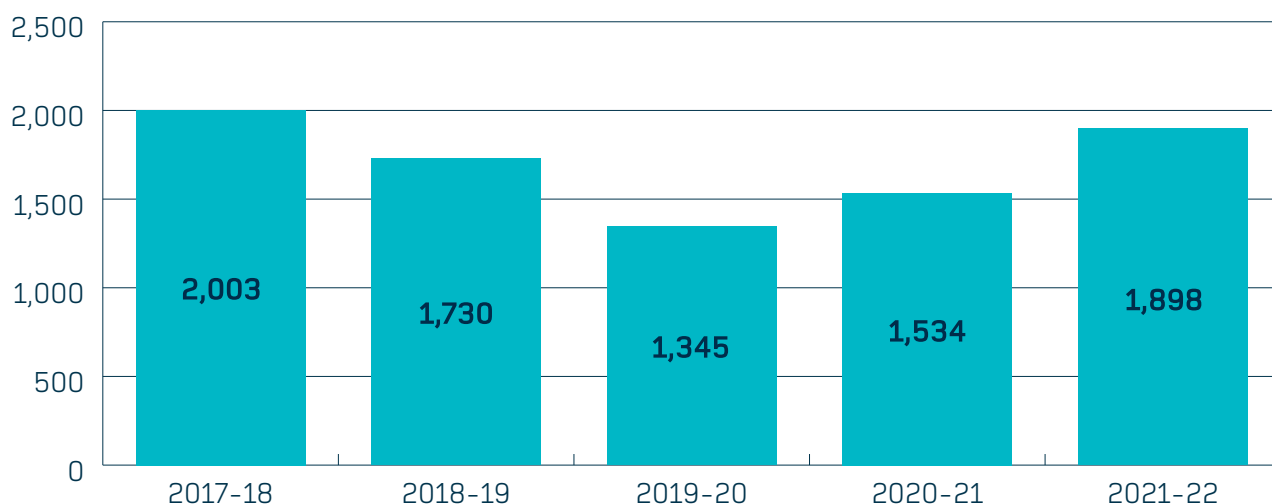
| Nurses, midwives and nursing associates |         |
|---|---------|
| 2021–2022                               | 113,579 |
| 2020–2021                               | 92,259  |
| 2019–2020                               | 84,303  |
| 2018–2019                               | 73,308  |
| 2017–2018                               | 68,434  |

**Figure 7**

## People from outside the EU/EEA 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.

**Figure 8****People from outside the EU/EEA who left the permanent register****Countries of training**

People who trained in the Philippines and India continue to represent a significant proportion of our permanent register and contribute strongly to our annual growth. In 2021-2022 there was a significant increase in the number of people joining the permanent register for the first time who trained in India, the Philippines and Nigeria.

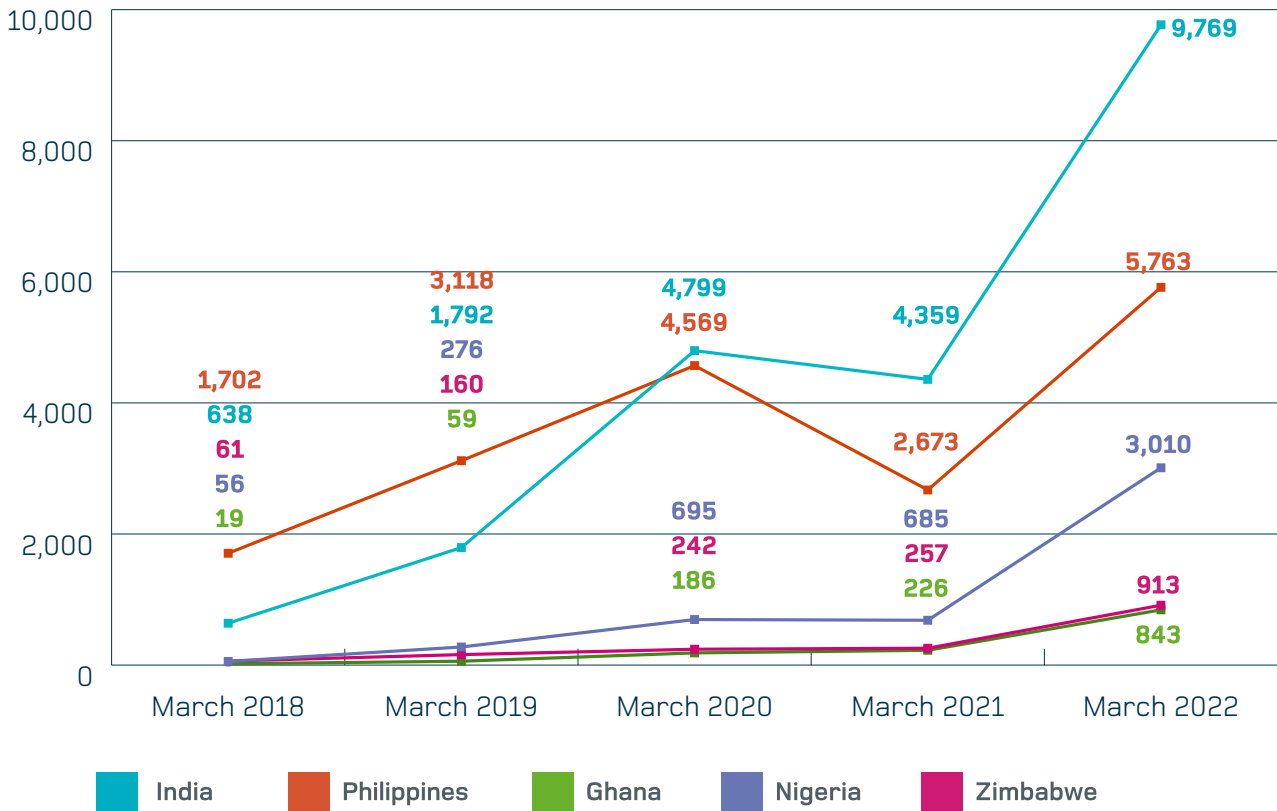
**Table 8****People on the permanent register by country of training outside the EU/EEA (top five countries)**

|                     | March 2018 | March 2019 | March 2020 | March 2021 | March 2022 |
|---------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>Philippines</b>  | 26,189     | 29,033     | 33,297     | 35,679     | 41,090     |
| <b>India</b>        | 17,730     | 19,326     | 24,005     | 28,192     | 37,815     |
| <b>Nigeria</b>      | 2,796      | 3,021      | 3,684      | 4,310      | 7,256      |
| <b>Zimbabwe</b>     | 2,229      | 2,357      | 2,575      | 2,794      | 3,655      |
| <b>South Africa</b> | 3,082      | 3,050      | 3,014      | 2,946      | 2,894      |



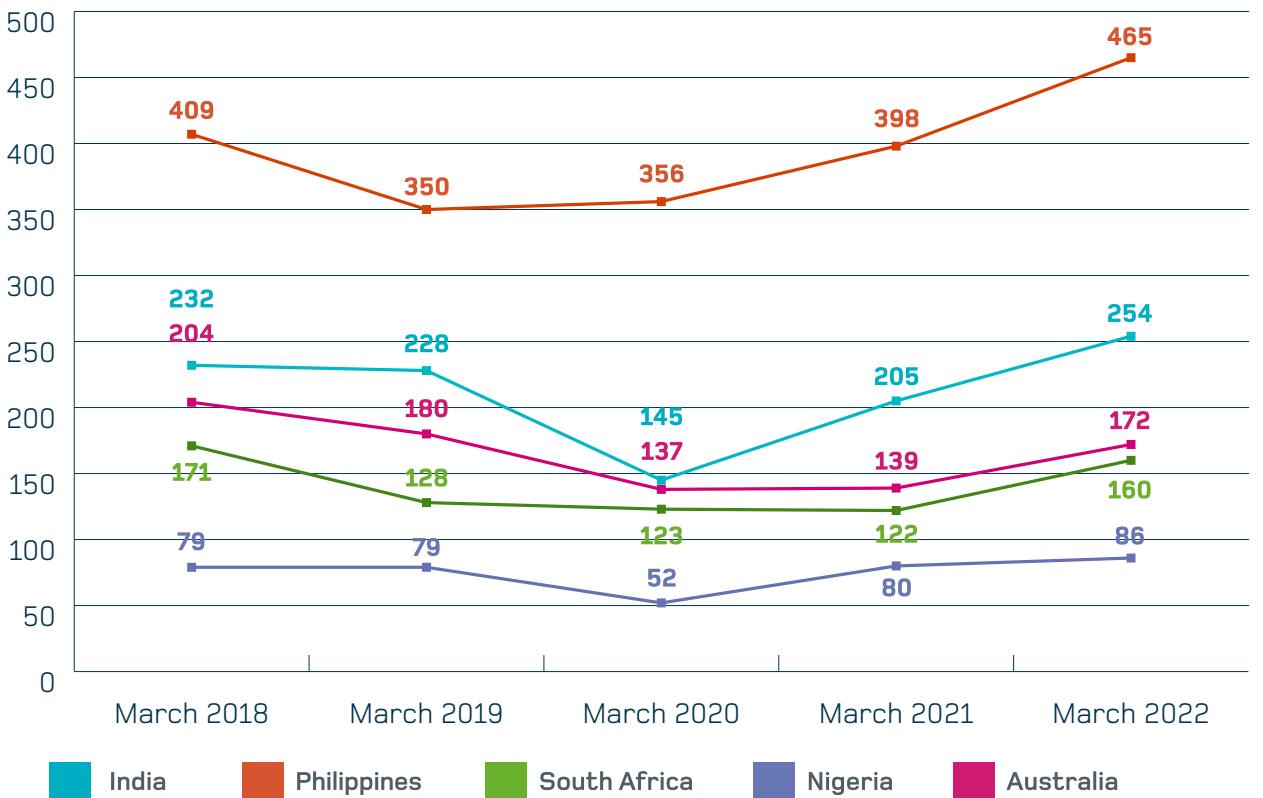
**Figure 9**

**People joining the permanent register for the first time by country of training outside the EU/EEA (top five countries)**



**Figure 10**

**People leaving the permanent register by country of training outside the EU/EEA (top five countries)**



# Professionals with an address outside the UK

**Of the 758,303 professionals on our permanent register, 29,926 had a registered address outside the UK.**

Some of these may be recent joiners who have yet to register a UK address with us. Others may have left the UK and either chosen to retain their NMC registration, or have yet to leave the register.

**Table 9**  
**Total number of people on the permanent register by registration type with an address outside the UK**

| Registration type                   | March 2018    | March 2019    | March 2020    | March 2021    | March 2022    |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Nurse                               | 14,594        | 15,825        | 20,077        | 20,209        | 29,290        |
| Midwife                             | 530           | 475           | 459           | 463           | 444           |
| Dual registrant (nurse and midwife) | 253           | 239           | 217           | 203           | 181           |
| Nursing associate                   | n/a           | 2             | 7             | 10            | 11            |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>15,377</b> | <b>16,541</b> | <b>20,760</b> | <b>20,885</b> | <b>29,926</b> |



# Profile of the permanent register

## Age

The number of people on our permanent register aged 31 to 40 increased significantly for the third year running. The combined number of people in the potential retirement age brackets, 56 and above, increased by 4.2 percent.

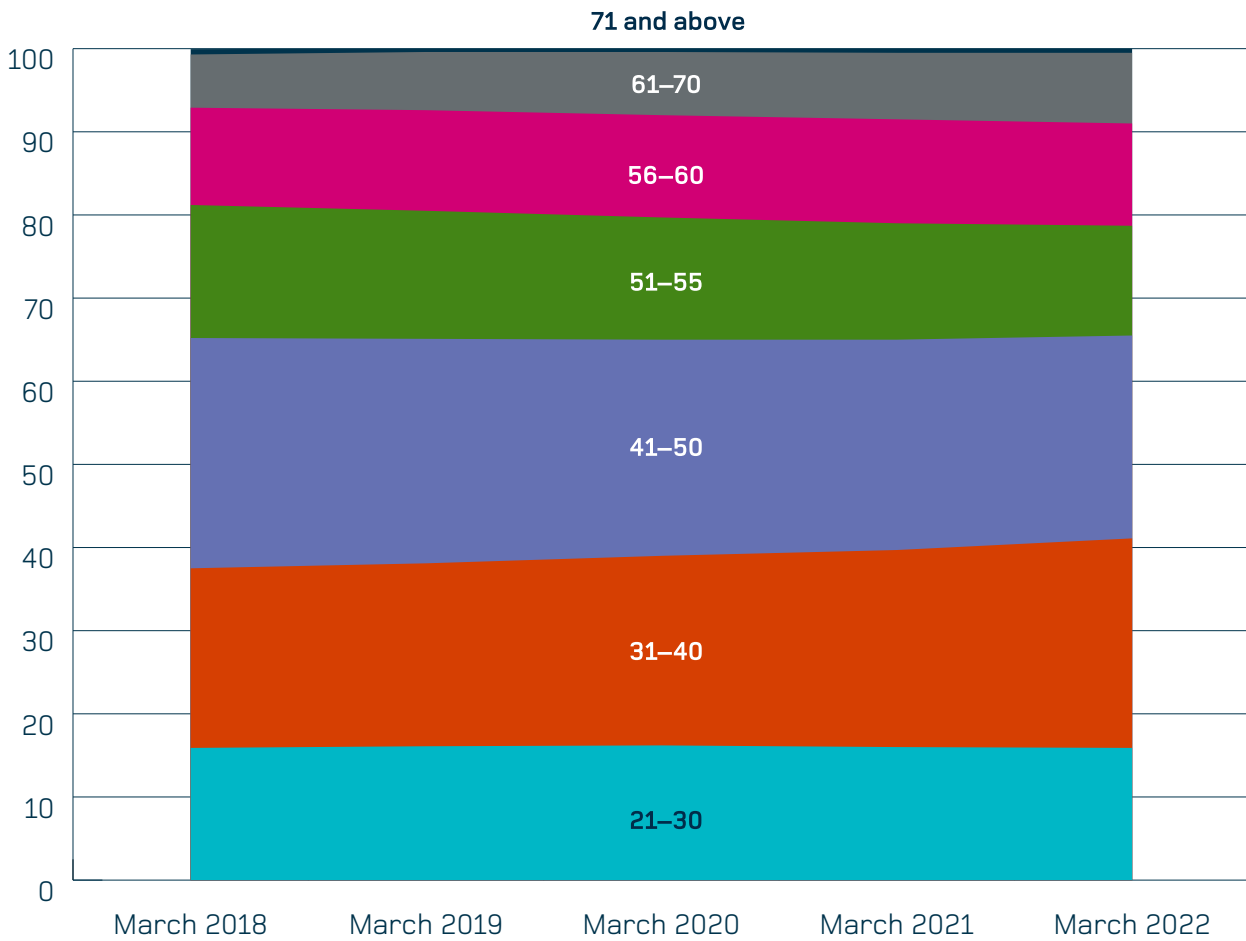
**Table 10**  
**Age profile of the permanent register**

|              | March 2018 | March 2019 |       | March 2020 |        | March 2021 |         | March 2022 |        |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------|------------|--------|------------|---------|------------|--------|
| Below 21     | 10         | 12         | +20%  | 9          | -25%   | 20         | +122.2% | 28         | +40%   |
| 21–30        | 110,029    | 111,873    | +1.7% | 116,388    | +4%    | 116,582    | +0.2%   | 120,401    | +3.3%  |
| 31–40        | 149,103    | 153,800    | +3.2% | 163,320    | +6.2%  | 173,154    | +6%     | 191,403    | +10.5% |
| 41–50        | 191,704    | 187,931    | -2%   | 185,888    | -1.1%  | 185,273    | -0.3%   | 185,125    | -0.1%  |
| 51–55        | 110,856    | 108,097    | -2.5% | 105,411    | -2.5%  | 102,307    | -2.9%   | 100,291    | -2%    |
| 56–60        | 81,194     | 84,729     | +4.4% | 87,874     | +3.7%  | 91,401     | +4%     | 93,211     | +2%    |
| 61–70        | 44,763     | 48,973     | +9.4% | 54,562     | +11.4% | 59,783     | +9.6%   | 64,332     | +7.6%  |
| 71 and above | 2,614      | 2,821      | +7.9% | 3,141      | +11.3% | 3,380      | +7.6%   | 3,512      | +3.9%  |

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



**Figure 11**  
**Age profile of the permanent register**



## Gender

Over the last five years there have been only fractional changes in this gender split, within a one percent swing.



**89%**

of people on our permanent register identify as female



**11%**

of people on our permanent register identify as male

Of the 758,303 professionals on the permanent register, 5,906 (0.78 percent) said their gender does not match their sex at birth.

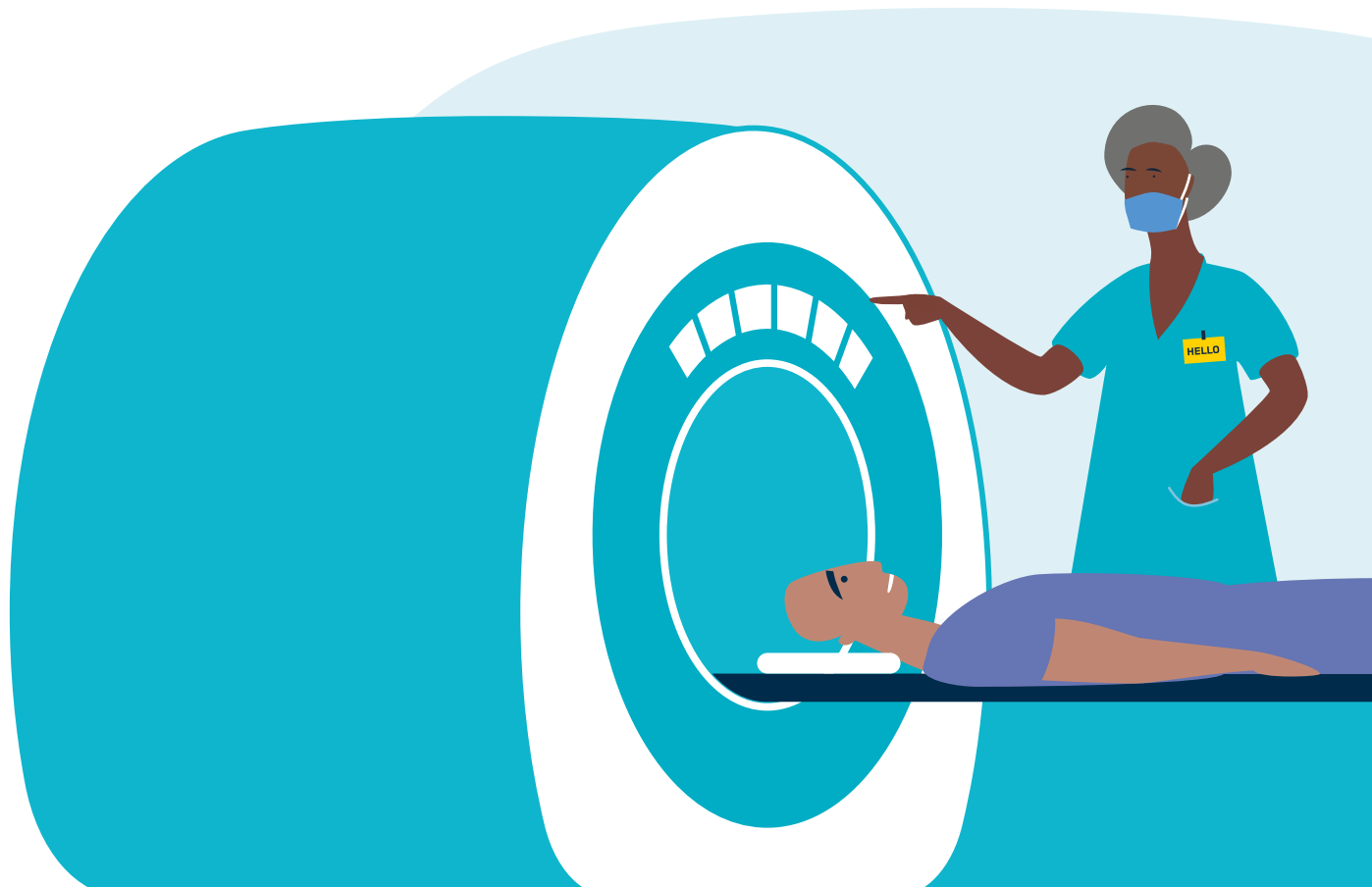
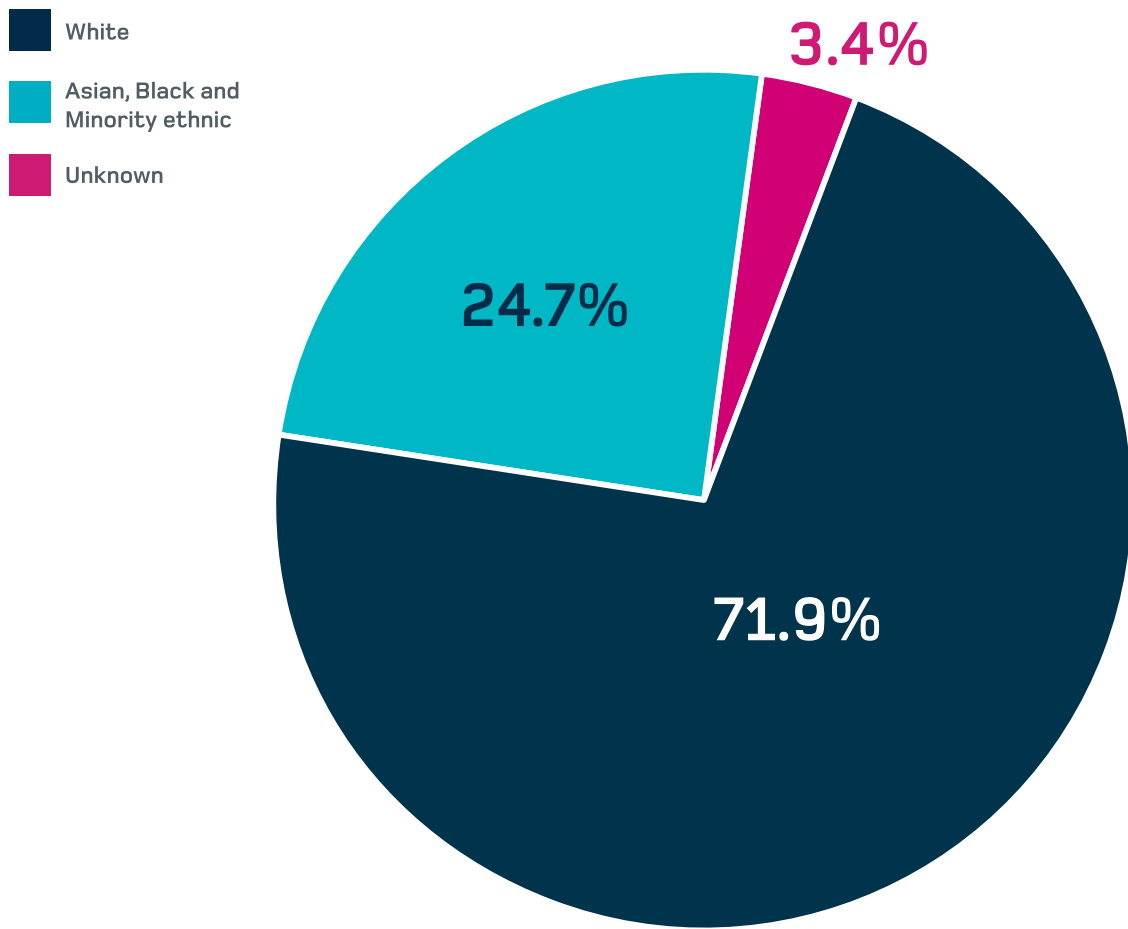
## Ethnicity

Of the 758,303 professionals on our register, 71.9 percent are White. 12.5 percent are Asian and 10 percent are Black. 1.1 percent are mixed race. 1 percent are other, 2.5 percent preferred not to say, and 0.9 percent didn't declare. Only a very small fraction of our permanent register are Arab - this category was introduced in 2020–2021 and will need more time to be fully representative.

**Table 11**  
**Ethnicity profile of the permanent register**

|   | 31 March 2022  |
|---|----------------|
| Arab  | 393            |
| Asian – Any other Asian background                        | 7,010          |
| Asian – Bangladeshi                                       | 1,448          |
| Asian – Chinese   | 1,900          |
| Asian – Filipina/Filipino                                 | 40,046         |
| Asian – Indian  | 39,503         |
| Asian – Pakistani   | 4,865          |
| Black – African   | 62,775         |
| Black – Any other black background                        | 1,616          |
| Black – Caribbean   | 11,373         |
| Mixed – Any other mixed /multiple ethnic background       | 528            |
| Mixed – White and Asian                                   | 2,414          |
| Mixed – White and black African                           | 1,560          |
| Mixed – White and black Caribbean                         | 4,126          |
| Other – Any other ethnic group                            | 7,624          |
| Prefer not to say   | 18,792         |
| Unknown   | 7,115          |
| White – Any other white background                        | 32,667         |
| White – English/Welsh/Scottish/<br>Northern Irish/British | 495,945        |
| White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller                          | 139            |
| White – Irish   | 16,464         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>758,303</b> |

**Figure 12**  
**Ethnicity profile of the permanent register**



## Fields of nursing practice

**There are currently four categories of registered nurse, and these are called the four fields of nursing practice. They cover adult, children, learning disabilities, and mental health nursing.**

The number of adult nurses on our permanent register continues to increase, reaching a total of 567,291. There were only slight increases or decreases in the other three fields.

The number of mental health nurses continued its steady annual rise to a new total of 92,780. Meanwhile the number of children's nurses has increased again to 55,062.

There was a small decrease in the number of learning disability nurses, with a total of 16,953.

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 12**  
**Nurses registered in the four fields of practice**

|            | Adult   | Children | Learning disabilities | Mental health |
|------------|---------|----------|-----------------------|---------------|
| March 2022 | 567,291 | 55,062   | 16,953                | 92,780        |
| March 2021 | 548,575 | 53,652   | 17,128                | 91,226        |
| March 2020 | 540,525 | 52,286   | 17,179                | 90,203        |
| March 2019 | 528,146 | 51,005   | 17,125                | 88,944        |
| March 2018 | 524,891 | 49,793   | 17,174                | 88,421        |



# SCPHN and specialist practice qualifications

The specialist community public health nursing (SCPHN) title is for registered nurses and midwives working in public health roles. They will have completed SCPHN courses approved by us.

Specialist Practice Qualifications (SPQs) are optional recordable qualifications that meet our standards but do not lead to admission to a part of the register or any protected title and function.

**Table 13**

**Total number of registered Specialist Community and Public Health Nurses**

|                                    | March 2018    | March 2019    | March 2020    | March 2021    | March 2022    |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Health visitors                    | 23,160        | 22,779        | 22,712        | 22,676        | 22,476        |
| School nurses                      | 3,611         | 3,669         | 3,744         | 3,874         | 4,024         |
| Occupational health nurses         | 3,205         | 3,174         | 3,121         | 3,067         | 3,008         |
| SCPHNs without a field of practice | 333           | 331           | 326           | 324           | 324           |
| Family nurses                      | 32            | 31            | 30            | 30            | 30            |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>30,341</b> | <b>29,984</b> | <b>29,933</b> | <b>29,971</b> | <b>29,862</b> |



**Table 14****Total number of special/recordable qualifications issued to professionals on the permanent register**

|  | March<br>2018  | March<br>2019  | March<br>2020  | March<br>2021  | March<br>2022  |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Nurse independent / Supplementary prescriber | 39,777         | 43,424         | 47,595         | 50,403         | 54,951         |
| Community practitioner nurse prescriber      | 39,094         | 39,200         | 39,440         | 39,490         | 39,476         |
| SP – District nursing                        | 15,386         | 15,257         | 15,097         | 15,025         | 15,020         |
| Teacher                                      | 4,359          | 4,674          | 4,855          | 4,917          | 4,846          |
| SP – Adult nursing                           | 3,877          | 3,808          | 3,752          | 3,729          | 3,657          |
| Lecturer / Practice educator                 | 4,851          | 4,439          | 4,113          | 3,823          | 3,540          |
| SP – General practice nursing                | 1,625          | 1,602          | 1,559          | 1,528          | 1,494          |
| Nurse independent prescriber                 | 1,160          | 1,092          | 1,022          | 975            | 914            |
| SP – Community mental health nursing         | 1,074          | 1,020          | 979            | 932            | 891            |
| SP – Community children’s nursing            | 794            | 792            | 801            | 803            | 808            |
| SP – Mental health                           | 585            | 567            | 550            | 542            | 527            |
| SP – Community learning disabilities nursing | 416            | 397            | 384            | 369            | 357            |
| SP – Children’s nursing                      | 339            | 328            | 322            | 315            | 303            |
| SP – Learning disability nurse               | 62             | 61             | 61             | 59             | 59             |
| <b>Total</b>                                 | <b>113,399</b> | <b>116,661</b> | <b>120,530</b> | <b>122,910</b> | <b>126,843</b> |

SP = Specialist practitioner

# Why did people leave?

**Since 2017 we've run an annual survey of professionals who left our register, to ask them why they left. We ran our latest survey throughout February 2022. Below is a summary of the findings. You can read the full report on our website.**

A total of 22,549 nurses, midwives and nursing associates left our permanent register between January 2021 and December 2021. We invited a sample of 21,035 of these people to complete our leavers' survey. A total of 6,458 people responded (a 30.7 percent response rate).

Respondents were asked to select up to three reasons for leaving from a pre-defined list of 21 options. Therefore, the number of reasons selected is greater than the number of respondents. We've also weighted the figures on reasons for leaving to ensure that the survey data is more representative of the wider group of people who left the register between January 2021 and December 2021. Further details on our methodology, respondent profile and how responses have been weighted can be found in the full report.

The three most commonly selected reasons for leaving the register were the same as in previous years: retirement (42.9 percent), personal circumstances (21.7 percent), and too much pressure (18.3 percent).

The Covid-19 pandemic (11.8 percent) moved from the 18th most cited reason for leaving last year up to the sixth most cited this year<sup>2</sup>. In response to the question about whether the Covid-19 pandemic affected their decision to leave the register, 36.5 percent of respondents said it had had either 'some' or a 'strong' influence.

Reasons for leaving differed between particular groups:

- **Country of training.** People trained in the UK were older (89.7 percent were aged 51 and above) and many said they were retiring. The 310 respondents who had trained in the EU/EEA were younger (73.4 percent were aged 21-40) and many said they were 'leaving or had left the UK' (66.6 percent) or cited Brexit (38.3 percent) or the Covid-19 pandemic (12.7 percent) as a reason for leaving. The Covid-19 pandemic having a strong influence on the decision to leave the register was most evident among respondents who trained outside the EU/EEA.
- **Age.** Older groups, aged 51 and over, most frequently left because they were retiring or there was too much pressure. Younger respondents (aged 21-50) most frequently left because they were leaving the UK. In general, older people said more commonly than younger registrants that the Covid-19 pandemic had a 'strong influence' on their leaving.

<sup>2</sup> Around four in five respondents to last year's survey had left the register before the Covid-19 pandemic. In this year's survey, all respondents left the register after the pandemic had begun.

- **Job role and work setting.** Of the five most common scopes of practice, people who had worked in midwifery, and in mental health, were more likely to cite too much pressure as a reason for leaving. Changes in personal circumstances were more frequently selected by those who worked in children’s and neo-natal nursing. Adult and general care nurses and social care nurses most commonly reported that the Covid-19 pandemic had a strong influence on reasons for leaving the register. Respondents working in research and health visitors most frequently said that Covid-19 had some impact on their leaving. The pandemic not influencing their leaving was the most common among policy workers, commissioning staff and midwives.
- **NHS workers.** People who worked in the NHS were significantly more likely to say they were retiring or leaving because of too much pressure. However, a higher proportion of people who had worked outside the NHS cited not being able to meet the revalidation requirements. There were no notable differences between the NHS and non-NHS respondents in terms of the impact of the pandemic on their leaving.

**Table 15**

**Reasons for leaving (10 most frequently selected responses): all respondents**

| Reason   | Number of respondents citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving | Percentage of respondents citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving |
|--|---|---|
| I have retired   | 2,771   | 42.9%   |
| My personal circumstances changed                                    | 1,406   | 21.7%   |
| Too much pressure (stressful, poor mental health)                    | 1,186   | 18.3%   |
| The workplace culture was having a negative effect on me             | 844   | 13.0%   |
| I am leaving or have left the UK                                     | 778   | 12.0%   |
| The Covid-19 pandemic influenced my decision to leave                | 765   | 11.8%   |
| Concerned about not being able to meet the revalidation requirements | 664   | 9.9%  |
| Disillusioned by the quality of the care provided to patients        | 525   | 8.1%  |
| Staffing levels  | 412   | 6.3%  |
| Other  | 352   | 5.4%  |

# Top three reasons for leaving

## Retirement

Some people noted that they had no other option but to retire due to the pressure, stress and unrealistic workload expected of them. Others said they had reached an appropriate retirement age or reached a natural conclusion to their careers.

Some also felt pressured into an early retirement due to the Covid-19 pandemic, feeling that they, or their families, were too vulnerable, and they wished to retire to be with their loved ones during times of uncertainty or bereavement.

**“I retired at 60 and that is something I had planned to do about two years earlier. As I was getting older, I didn’t feel I could keep up with the challenges of working in such a demanding environment. I loved my 41.5 years in the NHS and now I am loving my retirement. I feel I thoroughly deserve it.”**

Nurse, aged 61–65, England,  
adult and general care nursing

Other reasons for retirement included health problems such as injury, mental health issues or illness and becoming a primary carer of a family member.

## Personal circumstances

These include people who had experienced health problems either impacting themselves or a family member. They left their position either out of concern over their own, or their family members’ wellbeing, or because they felt that they would no longer meet revalidation requirements. Reasons for this include time off work, missing the revalidation deadline because of caring commitments, or the inability to complete certain tasks whilst ill.



**“I took early retirement as I developed a serious medical issue...and was struggling to maintain my full-time commitment as a senior nurse...I needed a break to see how my medical condition progressed and may return to nursing in a couple of years. Unfortunately, this means that I would not be able to meet requirements for current revalidation, so had no option other than leave the register.”**

Nurse, aged 61–65, Wales,  
mental health nursing

Others had left the register due to child minding responsibilities, bereavement or debilitating injuries.

## Too much pressure

Respondents commenting on this topic linked too much pressure or stress to other common reasons for leaving in their comments. For example, some respondents noted that the workplace culture and conditions were highly detrimental to their mental health. They left due to feeling unappreciated and under too much pressure, which caused high levels of unnecessary associated stress.

**“Pressure at work and the change of working practice did not allow me to provide the care I wanted to give. Covid restrictions compounded this. I was becoming stressed, tired and not sleeping well. Changes to workplace management structure also meant I did not feel I was listened to in the way I had previously been.”**

Nurse, aged 61–65, England,  
general practice nursing



Similarly others stated that staffing levels, particularly within the NHS, contributed to a negative workplace environment in terms of overworking, too much pressure on individuals, and unreasonably long shifts. In some cases, these factors were linked to the Covid-19 pandemic as well.

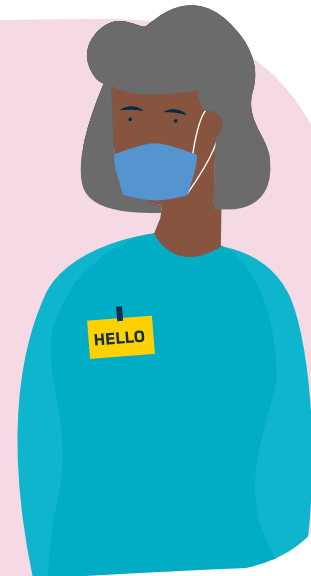
# The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

**The Covid-19 pandemic had either 'some' or a 'strong' influence on 36.5 percent of respondents choosing to leave the register.**

The main themes of the impact of the pandemic were health concerns about contracting Covid-19, spreading the virus to other people, changed work environment and duties, and increased workload and stress in combination with a lack of staff.

**"I had family abroad and because of the pandemic I was afraid that I was not close enough to them. I was afraid also that, because they are old, they would pass away when I'm not with them. I have two children...it is difficult in the UK with childcare when there is no help from parents. When the pandemic settles down, I would be more happy to re-join the register then because at least I would know that my family is safe and I can concentrate on my career."**

Nurse, aged 31-40, In the EU/EEA ,  
adult and general care nursing



**"It was not the virus itself, it was the working conditions it led to. Regularly caring for 2, 3,4 women who should have been 1-2-1 was terrifying and exhausting. Wearing the same mask all day because there were no others, begging for sterile gowns for crash sections, holding pee in all day because you are so short staffed, the list goes on."**

Nurse, Midwife, aged 31-40, England,  
midwifery

The vast majority of survey respondents (80.5 percent) said they hadn't deferred leaving the register due to the pandemic. Some (14 percent) said that they had deferred their decision to leave as a result of the pandemic and others (5.5 percent) chose 'other' as their response.

# Top responses by country of initial registration

There were differences in the reasons given by people who had trained in the UK compared to those that had trained in the EU/EEA, and outside of the EU/EEA.

Most respondents had trained in the UK (91.7 percent, or 5,927 respondents). Meanwhile 4.8 percent (310) of respondents had trained in the EU/EEA, and 3.4 percent (221) had trained outside of the EU/EEA.

**Table 16**

## Top five reasons for leaving given by people who had trained in the UK

| Reason   | Number of UK trained respondents citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving | Percentage of UK trained respondents citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving |
|--|--|--|
| I have retired   | 2,683  | 49.3%  |
| My personal circumstances changed                        | 1,263  | 23.2%  |
| Too much pressure (stressful, poor mental health)        | 1,097  | 20.1%  |
| The workplace culture was having a negative effect on me | 779  | 14.3%  |
| The Covid-19 pandemic influenced my decision to leave    | 628  | 11.5%  |

**Table 17****Top five reasons for leaving given by people who trained in the EU/EEA**

| Reason  | Number of EU/EEA trained respondents citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving | Percentage of EU/EEA trained respondents citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving |
|---|--|--|
| I am leaving or have left the UK                            | 401  | <b>66.6%</b>   |
| Brexit has encouraged me to consider working outside the UK | 231  | <b>38.3%</b>   |
| The Covid-19 pandemic influenced my decision to leave       | 77   | <b>12.7%</b>   |
| My personal circumstances changed                           | 62   | <b>10.2%</b>   |
| Too much pressure (stressful, poor mental health)           | 53   | <b>8.8%</b>  |

**Table 18****Top six reasons for leaving given by people who trained outside of the EU/EEA**

| Reason  | Number of respondents trained outside of the EU/EEA citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving | Percentage of respondents trained outside of the EU/EEA citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving |
|---|---|---|
| I am leaving or have left the UK                      | 151   | <b>35.5%</b>  |
| Personal circumstances                                | 80  | <b>18.8%</b>  |
| I have retired  | 78  | <b>18.3%</b>  |
| The Covid-19 pandemic influenced my decision to leave | 60  | <b>14.1%</b>  |
| Poor pay and benefits                                 | 54  | <b>12.7%</b>  |



# Covid-19 temporary register

## 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); and 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. We then opened the Covid-19 temporary register up to those who left our permanent register more recently.

In July 2021 we closed the temporary register to new international joiners. But we reopened it to internationally trained nurses in December 2021, in light of increasing pressures that the pandemic was causing at the time.

We have now received confirmation from the UK Government that our temporary register will close on 30 September 2022. We are supporting eligible professionals to move across to the permanent register, if they want to keep practising after this date.

**Table 19**

### Total people on the Covid-19 temporary register by registration type

|                   | 31 March 2022 |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Nurse             | 13,776        |
| Midwife           | 985           |
| Nurse and midwife | 191           |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>14,952</b> |

2,101 people left the Covid-19 temporary register to join the permanent register within the last year.

The majority of those are international professionals who joined the temporary register ahead of passing their OSCE.

754 (35.9 percent) are professionals who had previously been on our permanent register and are therefore returning to it.

**Table 20****Total people on the Covid-19 temporary register by country of initial registration**

|                      | England       | N<br>Ireland | Scotland     | Wales      | EU/EEA     | Non-<br>EU/EEA | Not yet<br>recorded* | Total         |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Nurse                | 10,454        | 329          | 1,643        | 567        | 225        | 271            | 287                  | <b>13,776</b> |
| Midwife              | 786           | 24           | 108          | 32         | 30         | 5              | 0                    | <b>985</b>    |
| Nurse and<br>midwife | 150           | 5            | 22           | 7          | 5          | 2              | 0                    | <b>191</b>    |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>11,390</b> | <b>358</b>   | <b>1,773</b> | <b>606</b> | <b>260</b> | <b>278</b>     | <b>287</b>           | <b>14,952</b> |

\*Those listed as not yet recorded were overseas applicants undergoing full registration at the time who haven't yet reached the point in their submission where data regarding their country of initial registration is mandatory.

**Table 21****Age profile of the Covid-19 temporary register**

|          | 31 March 2022 |
|----------|---------------|
| 21-30    | 292           |
| 31-40    | 1,058         |
| 41-50    | 1,380         |
| 51-55    | 964           |
| 56-60    | 3,027         |
| 61-70    | 7,732         |
| Above 71 | 499           |

**Gender****89.3%**

of people on our Covid-19 temporary register identify as female

**10.3%**

of people on our Covid-19 temporary register identify as male

**0.4%**

of people on our Covid-19 temporary register didn't declare their gender

23 Portland Place, London W1B 1PZ

T +44 20 7333 9333

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