

# The NMC register Northern Ireland

1 April 2023 –  
31 March 2024



# Welcome to our annual data report on the NMC register, offering an overview of the nursing and midwifery workforce in Northern Ireland.

Our unique data provide a definitive account of how many professionals are eligible to practise in the UK, how many are joining and leaving the workforce, where they were educated, demographic changes and more. Our accompanying leavers' survey provides an insight into people's reasons for leaving the register.

## The big picture

There are more nursing and midwifery professionals on the NMC register in Northern Ireland than ever – **28,725**. That's **1,038 (3.7 percent) more** registered professionals than 12 months ago, and **3,914 (15.8 percent) more** than five years ago.

We welcome this in the context of a rising demand for health and care and continuing pressure on health and social care services.

The number of first-time joiners continues to increase, with **1,380** new nursing and midwifery professionals registering with us this year alone. Of these, **81.2 percent** were educated in the UK (**1,121**). That's **9.8 percent more** in comparison to the same period last year (**1,021**) and **41.2 percent more** in comparison to the same period in the year 2018-2019 (**794**). This marks a continued steady increase of UK educated joiners in Northern Ireland.

In the last year, **882** professionals left the register in Northern Ireland. As a proportion of the register, this has stayed roughly the same – at **3.3 percent** in the year 2018-2019, to **3.2 percent** in the past year. Of these professionals, **15.2 percent** left within the first ten years of joining their chosen profession. This is the highest percentage since 2018.

**28,725**  
professionals on  
the register in  
Northern Ireland



As of March 2024,  
compared to last  
year

An increase of

**1,038**

**+3.7%**



**+3.8%**



**Nurses**

27,055

**+2.9%**



**Midwives**

1,338

**+2.5%**



**Dual  
registrants**

332

In the last 12 months,  
compared to same  
period in 2022-2023

**+12.8%**



**1,380**

joined the  
register

**+7%**



**882**

left the  
register

## Continued growth from overseas

The numbers of internationally educated professionals joining the register in Northern Ireland are the highest since the year 2018-2019. Although still marking a small percentage of joiners this is a quickly growing cohort.

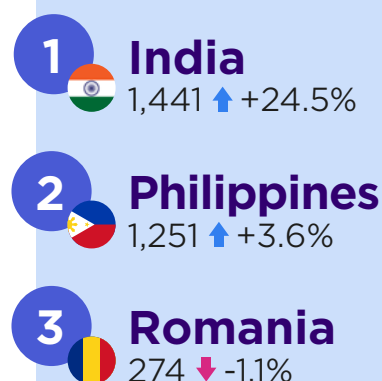
There were **259** internationally educated joiners<sup>1</sup>, a **28.2 percent rise** from the same time in the previous year. Of the internationally educated new joiners, **42.5 percent (110)** were educated in India and **11.6 percent (30)** in the Philippines.

Northern Ireland has seen a small increase in the number of professionals from 'red list' countries joining the register. We are thankful to all professionals who choose to use their skills to provide safe and kind care to people in the UK. We remind employers and agencies to follow the relevant codes of practice to help maintain ethical standards and support global health equity.



<sup>1</sup> We know this figure will be lower than the actual numbers joining in Northern Ireland, as professionals aren't required to give us a UK address in order to join the register. Professionals can join the register with an address outside of the UK. They 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](#). This will allow us to have a better understanding of who is on the register and where they live.

Top non-UK countries of education as of March 2024, compared to last year



As of March 2024

**43 years, 4 months**

average age of professionals in Northern Ireland

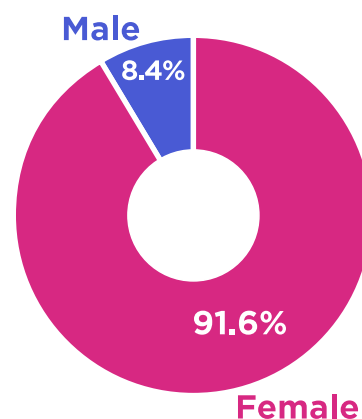


**13.1%**

of register in Northern Ireland from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. In 2019, **8.3%** of register in Northern Ireland from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.



Gender split of the register



## Demographic changes to the register

Of UK educated joiners in Northern Ireland, **3.0 percent** were from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds. With more internationally educated professionals joining the register and a more ethnically diverse mix of UK educated joiners, the profile of the register is gradually changing. Professionals from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds now make up **13.1 percent** of professionals with an address in Northern Ireland on the register. That's an increase of **1.7 percent** compared to last year and **4.8 percent higher** than five years ago.

## Why did people leave the register in Northern Ireland?

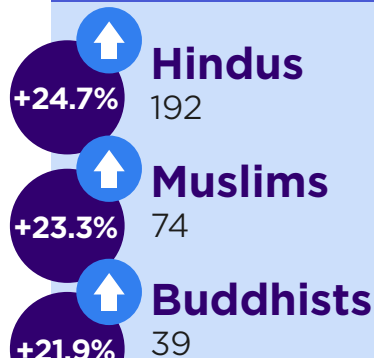
Since 2017 we've run an annual survey of professionals who left our register, to ask them why they left. We ran our latest survey in March 2024. You can read more detail in our comprehensive [NMC Register Leavers' Survey Summary](#).

In this year's survey, the proportion of leavers in Northern Ireland who would recommend a nursing or midwifery career remains low, although it is higher here than anywhere else in the UK at **22 percent** this year, compared to **23 percent** last year.

In line with findings from last year's survey, around half of total respondents left earlier than planned - typically five years sooner than expected.

While retirement and poor health rank as the top two reasons for leaving the register in Northern Ireland (matching the overall survey sample), unlike the other nations, concern about meeting revalidation requirements is ranked third.

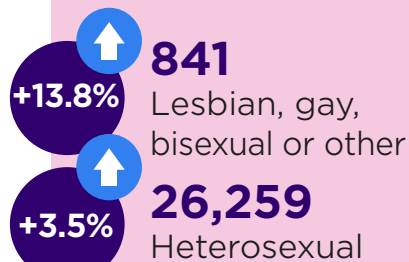
Fastest growing religions as of March 2024, compared to last year



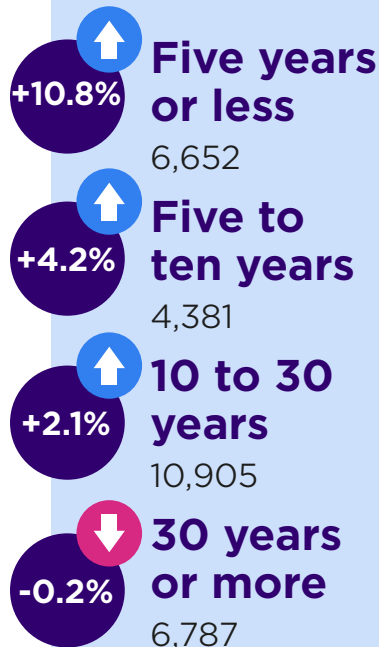
As of March 2024

**709** out of 28,725 people have declared a disability

Sexual orientation as of March 2024, compared to last year



Time on the register, as of March 2024, compared to last year



## Improving the experience of professionals and the public

We hope that this overview of our register in Northern Ireland, alongside our comprehensive [data tables](#) and [NMC Register Leavers' Survey Summary](#) can be used by partners and the wider sector in their workforce planning.

Please do [get in touch](#) with any questions about our data or ideas for how we might improve the usefulness of this report.



**Matthew McClelland,**  
Executive Director of Strategy  
and Insight



As of March 2024,  
compared to last  
year



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 people 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 826,000 nurses and midwives in the UK and nursing associates in England, we have an important role to play in making this vision a reality.

We're here to protect the public by upholding high professional nursing and midwifery standards, which the public has a right to expect. That's why we're improving the way we regulate, enhancing our support for colleagues, professionals and the public, and working with our partners to influence the future of health and social care.

Our core role is to **regulate**. We set and promote high education and professional standards for nurses and midwives across the UK, and nursing associates in England and quality assure their education programmes. We maintain the integrity of the register of those eligible to practise. And we investigate concerns about professionals – something that affects very few people on our register every year.

To regulate well, we **support** nursing and midwifery professionals and the public. We create resources and guidance that are useful throughout professionals' careers, helping them to deliver our standards in practice and address challenges they face. We work collaboratively so everyone feels engaged and empowered to shape our work.

We work with our partners to address common concerns, share our data, insight and learning, to **influence** and inform decision-making and help drive improvement in health and social care for people and communities.

23 Portland Place, London W1B 1PZ  
+44 20 7637 7181 [www.nmc.org.uk](http://www.nmc.org.uk)

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