

The NMC register Scotland

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 Scotland.

Our unique data provides 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 now **74,485** nurses and midwives on the NMC register in Scotland. That's **1,529 (2.1 percent) more** registered professionals than 12 months ago, and **5,438 (7.9 percent) more** than five years ago.

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

In keeping with recent years, the number of first-time joiners has risen again in Scotland, with **3,658** new nursing and midwifery professionals registering with us this year alone. Of these, **88.8 percent** were educated in the UK. At **3,250**, the number of UK educated joiners was **9.6 percent more** in comparison to the same period last year (**2,966**) and **38.9 percent more** than the same period in the year 2018-2019 (**2,340**). This marks a continued steady increase of UK educated joiners in Scotland.

In the last year, **2,957** professionals left the register in Scotland. As a proportion of the register, this has stayed roughly the same - from **4.3 percent** in the year 2018-2019, to **4.1 percent** in the past year. Of these professionals, **13.8 percent** left within the first ten years of joining their chosen profession. This is the highest since 2019.

74,485

professionals on the register in Scotland



As of March 2024, compared to last year

An increase of

1,529

+2.1%



+2.0%



Nurses

70,395

+3.9%



Midwives

3,753

-3.2%



Dual registrants

330

+133.3%



Nursing Associates

7

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

+14.4%



3,658

joined the register

+5.5%



2,957

left the register

Continued growth from overseas

The number of internationally educated professionals joining the register in Scotland is increasing significantly, but much less quickly than the UK educated cohort. There were **408** international joiners, a **76.6 percent rise**¹ from the same time in the previous year.

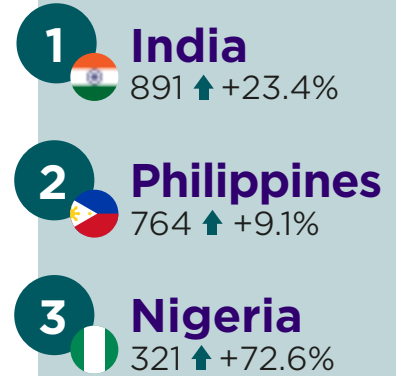
Of the international new joiners, **24.8 percent (101)** were educated in India. This has increased rapidly over the last few years, from **33** people in the previous year and from only nine people in the year 2018-2019. Another **11.3 percent (46)** professionals, were educated in the Philippines, up from just two people in the year 2018-2019.

In Scotland, we continue to see rises in the number of first-time joiners from several 'red list' countries from which active recruitment is not permitted. 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.



¹ We know this figure will be lower than the actual numbers joining in Scotland, 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

44 years, 3 months

average age of professionals in Scotland

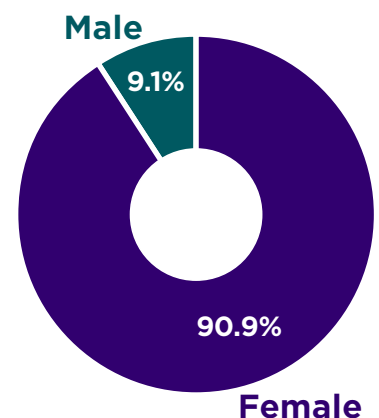


6.7%

of register in Scotland from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. In 2019, **5.2%** of register in Scotland from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.



Gender split of the register



Demographic changes to the register

As with the UK picture, we're seeing a changing ethnic profile of the register in Scotland due to an increase in international professionals joining, together with an ethnically diverse cohort of UK educated joiners.

Of the UK joiners in Scotland, **8 percent** were from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds. Professionals from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds now make up **6.7 percent** of the total register in Scotland. That's **0.9 percentage points higher** than last year and **1.5 percentage points more** than five years ago.

Why did people leave the register in Scotland?

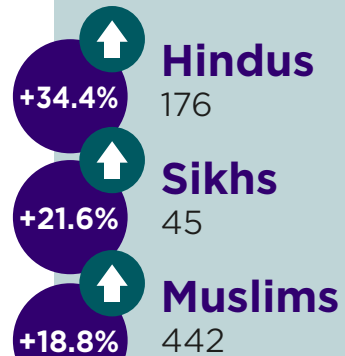
Since 2017 we've run an annual survey of professionals who left our register, to ask them why they left. We ran our latest survey in March 2024. You can read more detail in our comprehensive [NMC Register Leavers' Survey Summary](#).

In this year's survey, the proportion of leavers in Scotland who would recommend a career as a nurse or midwife remains low, although it has increased from **14 percent** last year, to **20 percent** this 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.

In Scotland, the top four reasons - retirement, poor health, burnout, and a change in personal circumstances - are consistent with the UK-wide picture and are the same as last year. "Lack of support from colleagues or senior members of staff" and "experiences of bullying, harassment, or discrimination" ranked higher in Scotland as a reason for leaving than for all leavers in the UK.

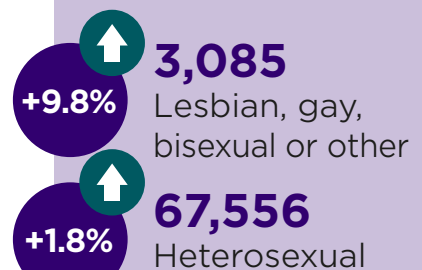
Fastest growing religions as of March 2024, compared to last year



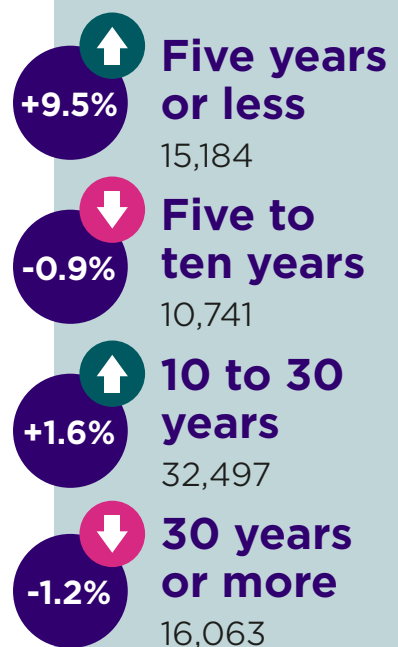
As of March 2024

2,228 out of 74,485 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 Scotland, alongside our comprehensive [data tables](#) and [NMC Register Leavers' Survey Summary](#) can be used by partners and the wider sector in their workforce planning.

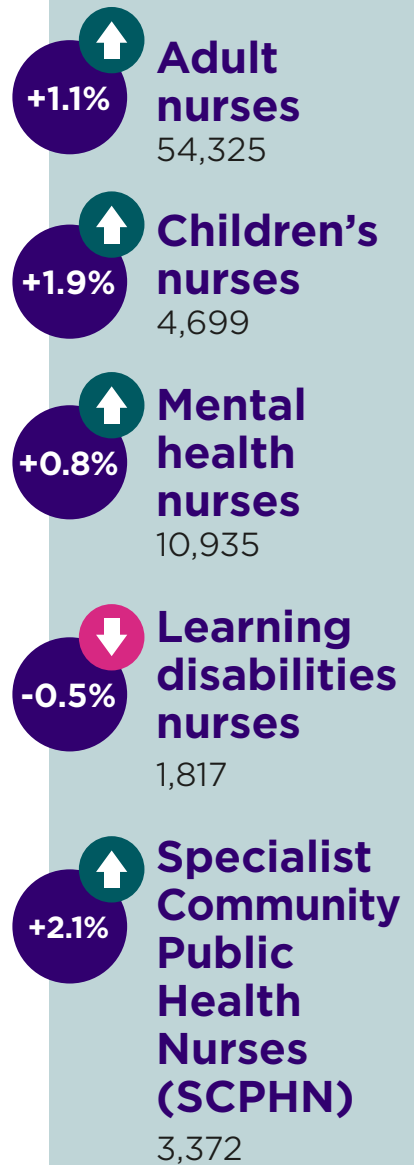
Please do [get in touch](#) with any questions about our data or ideas for how we might improve the usefulness of this report.



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.

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