

Stakeholder information pack on our response to Covid-19

21 April 2020

Introduction	3
Our role.....	3
Our new strategy and organisational structure	3
Expanding the nursing and midwifery workforce during the Covid-19 outbreak.....	4
Future considerations for the temporary register.....	6
Deployment of those on our temporary register.....	6
Arrangements for students and clinical placements.....	6
Guidance for employers.....	7
Supporting professionals on our permanent register	8
Availability of personal protective equipment for nursing and midwifery professionals.....	8
Advanced care planning / anticipatory care planning.....	8
Supporting registrants working in all settings.....	9
Frequently asked questions	9
Contact us.....	9
Social media and communications pack.....	10
Annexe 1 – FAQs	11
Frequently asked questions about registration	11
Frequently Asked Questions for overseas professionals.....	12
Frequently Asked Questions for students.....	12

Introduction

This pack provides the latest information about the Nursing and Midwifery Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic. As the regulator of nurses, midwives across the UK and nursing associates in England we are playing an active role in expanding the nursing and midwifery workforce during this challenging time.

If you have any questions about the detail contained in this pack then please do contact us at stakeholders@nmc-uk.org. We are working in a rapidly changing environment and we will be reviewing and updating the information in this pack on a regular basis.

You can find the most up-to-date information on our coronavirus hub at the NMC's website at www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus.

Our role

The NMC has made some operational changes during the Covid-19 pandemic, to prioritise its core regulatory functions and ensure it continues to regulate nurses, midwives and nursing associates effectively.

Our priorities in these unprecedented circumstances are:

- maintaining our important role in protecting the public and promoting public confidence in nursing and midwifery
- ensuring we continue to register the right people swiftly – the health and social care system needs nurses, midwives and nursing associates more than ever now
- playing our part in the actions needed to respond to the coronavirus pandemic
- looking after our colleagues to make sure people are safe and we can continue to operate effectively

For further information about our regulatory functions [please read our statement](#) on how we are regulating in these unprecedented times, including information on changes to registration and revalidation and fitness to practice.

Our new strategy and organisational structure

On 29 April, we will launch our 2020-2025 strategy. While our focus will rightly remain on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic at this time, we will begin to embed some of the principles outlined in this news strategy, including our new values and behaviours, in order to respond in the best way to the current situation.

This includes making changes to our organisational structure. On 6 April we launched a new organisational structure to help us deliver our response to Covid-19 and our new strategy as effectively as possible, for the benefit of everyone's health and wellbeing.

The new structure will help our work keep pace with a rapidly developing health and social care sector, by helping us improve our work on strategy, insight and horizon scanning.

From 6 April we are organised in six directorates:

- A new 'Professional Regulation' directorate which will combine our existing registration and revalidation and fitness to practise operational functions. This directorate will be led by Emma Broadbent.
- A new 'Professional Practice' directorate, led by Dr Geraldine Walters CBE, responsible for shaping and supporting good professional practice on the part of people on our register, based upon our existing education and standards team.
- A new 'Strategy and Insight' directorate, led by Matthew McClelland. This directorate will oversee high quality insight and analysis that will enable us to regulate well.
- Edward Welsh continuing to lead the renamed Communications and Engagement Directorate and Andy Gillies remaining Director of Resources and Technology Services.
- In addition, we will shortly be advertising for a Director for the brand new People and Organisational Effectiveness Directorate which will be focused on making sure our people, legal, governance and continuous improvement frameworks help us to deliver our core regulatory functions and new strategic aims.

These changes will support Andrea Sutcliffe to lead the NMC as Chief Executive and Registrar.

Expanding the nursing and midwifery workforce during the Covid-19 outbreak

As you will be aware, the Government has introduced emergency legislation that has allowed us to create a Covid-19 emergency temporary register. This means we can now temporarily register fit, proper and suitably experienced people, so that they can practise if they want to and feel able to do so.

On 20 March 2020, we invited around 50,000 nurses and midwives who left the permanent register within the last 3 years to return to practice and join the Covid-19 temporary register.

On 06 April 2020, we invited around 2,000 overseas applicants, including both nurses and midwives, who have completed all parts of their NMC registration process except the final clinical examination (OSCE), to join the Covid-19 temporary register. These individuals will have conditions of practice placed on them.

On 15 April 2020, we invited around 40,000 nurses and midwives who left the permanent register within the last 4 to 5 years to return to practice and join the Covid-19

temporary register. This included people who had started but not completed Return to Practice Programmes. These individuals will also have conditions of practice placed on them.

When we opened the temporary register on 27 March, 7,510 nursing and midwifery professionals appeared on it. There are now over 10,000 professionals on the temporary register. We will keep you updated on the number and breakdown of those on our temporary register regularly.

The latest breakdown of the temporary register (data as of 16 April):

	<i>Country of address</i>					UK
	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	Not given	
Midwife	540	9	57	23	1	630
Nurse	8,258	215	1,093	464	47	10,077
Midwife; Nurse	95	4	11	3	-	113
Blank (unclear data)	2	-	-	-	-	2
Total	8,896	228	1,161	490	48	10,823

We have also emailed those who are on the permanent register but not currently in clinical practice, encouraging them to consider moving into a clinical setting if it is appropriate for them to do so.

Those on our temporary register are not permanent registrants. They will no longer be registered with the NMC:

- when the Covid-19 temporary register ceases because the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care declares the emergency conditions no longer exist;
- if at any time they decide to opt out of the temporary register; or,
- if our Registrar decides to remove their name from the temporary register during this time.

We are working closely with partners across the sector to support and encourage the nursing and midwifery workforce during this challenging time.

Future considerations for the temporary register

We have carefully considered how we can continue to increase workforce capacity during this time if required. We have identified an additional group of people who we may invite to join our temporary register if needed, with conditions being placed on their practice.

This group is nursing students on an NMC approved undergraduate programme who are expected to qualify in the next 6 months. We hope to make a decision on when this group could join the temporary register in the coming weeks, in consultation with our key partners, including the Department of Health and Social Care and governments in the devolved administrations.

For further information on our work to expand the temporary register and the roles our partners are playing in supporting us to do this, [please read our joint statement](#).

Deployment of those on our temporary register

We are sharing details of those on our temporary register with the four countries in the UK, who are co-ordinating and planning how best to deploy the emergency health and social care workforce in their nation. They'll contact professionals directly on the email address that they have given us, to see if they want to work.

If you are aware of professionals who have joined the temporary register and have not yet been contacted for deployment, they should visit the below websites for further information:

[Click here for England](#) (or call NHS Employers on 03332 407 552)

[Click here for Scotland](#)

[Click here for Wales](#)

[Click here for Northern Ireland](#)

Arrangements for students and clinical placements

We recognise the important contribution that many of our nursing and midwifery students will be making to the national response to the Covid-19 outbreak and the impact that the outbreak will have on those who are studying.

As such we have set [temporary standards](#) for our Approved Education Institutions (AEIs) and their practice learning partners to support all of their nursing and midwifery students throughout this emergency period. These will no longer apply after the emergency period.

Our temporary standards will enable:

- students in the final six months of their nursing or midwifery programme to complete the rest of their training in clinical practice;
- first year postgraduate students to spend up to 80% of their hours in clinical placements;
- undergraduate students in their penultimate year and in the first six months of their final year to spend up to 80% of their hours in clinical placements;
- first year undergraduate students to spend up to 100% of their programme in theory or academic learning.

Our full joint statements and agreed actions with our partners across the health and care system are available:

- [here for nursing students in their final six months of study](#);
- [here for midwifery students in their final six months of study](#);
- [here for nursing and midwifery students not in their final six months](#).

Guidance for employers

We recognise that employers of health and social care services are working under enormous pressure at this time. We have developed dedicated pages on our website for employers, offering information on a range of areas including:

- Responsibilities as an employer of a Covid-19 temporary registrant
- Indemnity arrangements
- Raising concerns about a person on the Covid-19 temporary register.

There is also guidance for employers on how to support registrants on our permanent register, including on:

- Revalidation deadlines
- Fitness to practise and registration processes
- Returning to clinical practice
- Supporting students in clinical placements.

If any employers in your networks has any questions about this information then please to encourage them to contact the NMC via the details below.

Supporting professionals on our permanent register

We know that nursing and midwifery professionals may be feeling anxious about Covid-19 and the impact that it will have on their role as a registered professional. We have a dedicated page on our website to support our registrants who are already practicing. We have made a number of statements, some jointly with our partners across the health and care system, on key issues affecting professionals right now:

- Full joint statements and agreed actions with our partners across the health and care system for [nurses](#) and [midwives](#).
- [Joint Statement on developing immediate critical care nursing capacity](#)

If a registrant has any concerns about their practice then we urge them to speak to their employer who will be able to provide them with more information.

Availability of personal protective equipment for nursing and midwifery professionals

It is vital to ensure that frontline staff in health and social care are supported to carry out their roles by being provided with the right personal protective equipment (PPE). We have heard from registrants that they are worried about the risk involved in caring for patients without this equipment. We have also heard from many former nurses and midwives who wish to re-join the register that the lack of appropriate equipment is a barrier to re-joining.

We have recently published a statement on PPE to support our registrants to put the Code into practice and exercise their professional judgment during this unprecedented pandemic situation. You can read the statement [here](#).

Advanced care planning / anticipatory care planning

We know from people using services, patients, registrants and media reports that there are instances where advance care plans / anticipatory care plans, including those with or without 'do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation' (DNACPR) forms, have been applied to groups of people in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The nature of this pandemic means that practitioners are under great pressure to make urgent, clinically complex decisions. To make sure that peoples' wishes and preferences can be taken into account, the need for advanced care planning with them and their families is more important than ever.

We have published a joint statement with the General Medical Council on advance care planning, including guidance for our registrants. This can be found [here](#).

Supporting registrants working in all settings

We need to ensure that we are recognising the vital contribution that those working in social care and community settings are making in response to coronavirus, as well as the NHS.

We are hearing of more and more people who use social care services being affected by Covid-19 and this is like to increase as the pandemic continues. It is clear that social care nurses and their colleagues have a critical role to play and are just as much on the frontline in this pandemic as staff in the NHS.

We know from the experiences social care nurses have shared with us that action is needed to better support the social care workforce to that they can safely care for people at this time.

We have published a statement in response to the Government's adult social care action plan, which can be found [here](#).

We know that Covid-19 has created significant challenges for all our professionals we will continue to advocate for nurses and midwives working in all settings across the UK at this time.

Frequently asked questions

We are monitoring the queries we are regularly being asked by registrants and stakeholders and collating a list of responses to frequently asked questions. Please find them attached at annexe 1. A full list of our FAQs in relation to Covid-19 can be found on [our website](#).

Contact us

If people in your networks have any general queries about the NMC, they can contact us at 020 7333 9333. If they have questions about our temporary register they should email tempreg@nmc-uk.org or call 020 7637 7181.

As a key stakeholder of the NMC, our stakeholder relations team is also here to support with your queries and any feedback you have on our work. You can contact the team at stakeholders@nmc-uk.org.

Social media and communications pack

To help us spread the word about the temporary register, it would be great if you can share our messages on your own social media channels or in newsletters. Below are some suggested posts; however, feel free to create your own - just make sure you include [the link to our Covid-19 web hub](#) which contains all relevant information.

You can also retweet the information we share on our Twitter account [@nmcnews](#).

Suggested posts

Twitter

Over 10,000 professionals have joined the @nmcnews temporary register.

Let's say thank you to all the nursing and midwifery professionals supporting the response to #Covid19

www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus #ThankYou

Twitter

Do you employ nurses, midwives or nursing associates?

Check out the @nmcnews guidance for you during the #Covid19 pandemic

<https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/information-for-employers/>

Newsletter

The Nursing and Midwifery Council has responded to the Covid-19 pandemic by establishing a temporary register of former nurses and midwives and professionals with overseas qualifications.

Find out more about the temporary register, information about how the NMC is regulating during this time, and FAQs on a wide range of topics on their [Covid-19 web hub](#).

Newsletter

Do you employ nurses, midwives or nursing associates? The Nursing and Midwifery Council has launched guidance to help you during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Find answers to your questions about employing temporary registrants, fitness to practise and registrations processes on their [Covid-19 web hub](#).

Annexe 1 – FAQs

Frequently asked questions about registration

I'm worried that my PIN is at risk if I need to act outside my normal job. What should I do?

As mentioned in our [recent joint statement](#), we recognise that in highly challenging circumstances you may need to depart from established procedures in order to care for patients and people using health and social care services.

Our regulatory standards are designed to be flexible and to provide a framework for decision-making in a wide range of situations.

In-line with [the Code](#), use your professional judgment, working with other colleagues across all disciplines to assess risk, find the best way to provide care for people while recognising and working within the limits of your competence.

I'm a registrant who is not working, or in non-clinical role. How can I return to clinical practice?

We are encouraging those who are currently on the NMC register but not working in clinical care to consider coming into clinical practice during this time. We advise you to contact the Department of Health in your country who will be coordinating this. Please see the phone numbers listed under the 'deployed' section for who to contact.

Do I need to pay to join the Covid-19 temporary register?

No, you do not need to pay a registration fee to join the Covid-19 temporary register.

What indemnity cover/insurance do I need to have to work?

Please speak to your employer about what arrangements will be in place for indemnity cover. The government is ensuring that legal protections will be in place for those who take part in work as part of the Covid-19 response.

Why did you choose to have an opt-in temporary register?

We made the decision to invite people to join our temporary register, instead of automatically placing certain groups on the register and asking them to opt-in if they would like to do so. The reasons for doing this include:

- **Supporting deployment:** it is crucial that the nurses and midwives who have joined our Covid-19 temporary register are able to be rapidly and effectively deployed to critical services in the NHS, the community and care homes across the UK. The opt-in process means that all those on our temporary register have explicitly agreed and are ready to join the response to Covid-19. With an opt-out approach we would be unable to guarantee that those on the temporary register were willing to practise or that employers would be able to contact them and get them into work, causing unnecessary delay in getting people to the frontline.

- **Acting as a responsible regulator:** to fulfil our core regulatory role of protecting the public it is essential that we are able to maintain a relationship with the individuals on our temporary register. The opt-in approach ensures that we have current information about all our temporary registrants, including current contact details so that we can share information with them, contact them if any concerns are raised about their practice and inform them when their temporary registration ends.

We have every confidence that our opt-in approach is the right one for our registrants. We will continue to invite appropriate groups to join our temporary register at the right time so that we can continue to expand the nursing and midwifery workforce in a safe and effective way.

Frequently Asked Questions for overseas professionals

Will the new Test of Competence be delivered over the summer as planned?

It's essential that we are able to support registrants so that they can focus on tackling Covid-19. As such, we're reviewing the launch of the new TOC. It's likely that we will postpone it to a later date. We will provide further information about the likely launch date following our review. Find out more [here](#).

Will there be any delays in my application?

The NMC will be working hard in these challenging times to ensure that candidates do not experience any delays. Should there be any delays you will be notified.

Will there be any additional fees if I decide to postpone my OSCE?

No, there will be no additional fees if you decide to postpone your OSCE. If you want to reschedule your OSCE please get in touch with your chosen test centre.

What will happen to my visa if I can't take my OSCE?

We understand that candidates may have concerns now that our test centres have closed. Please be assured that we have been proactively talking to UKVI on the matter. UKVI have made it very clear that no one will have a negative outcome through the immigration system due to circumstances beyond their control.

Frequently Asked Questions for students

What happens if I gain my degree and am ready to join the register as a fully qualified nurse while I am on the Covid-19 temporary register?

You will need to go through the normal registration process if you wish to join our permanent register. The Covid-19 temporary register will close when the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care states that we are no longer in an emergency period meaning you will no longer be temporarily registered.

What will happen if I don't want to take part in a clinical placement?

If you don't want to take part in a clinical placement you don't have to. Your education institution will consider your personal circumstances to find a solution for you. You also have the option of deferring your placement during this time. You will need to discuss this with your education institution.

I can't complete my placement because it's closed or I'm unwell. How does this affect my degree?

Your education institution will have processes to support you during any period of sickness or if your institution closes. Depending on the circumstances your placement may be deferred for a period of time by your education provider. This may extend the time it takes for you to complete your programme once you return.

If I take up an extended clinical placement, will I be paid?

We understand that some recompense will be made for those who take up extended clinical placements. Further guidance will be provided by the Department of Health of your respective country.

If I am on the Covid-19 temporary register, will this count towards my practice hours?

If you opt to go onto the Covid-19 temporary register then your university may allow you to count it towards your practice hours. However, they would need to be assured that you were appropriately assessed to sign off on all of your learning outcomes. If you haven't, you may need to go back into study.