



The Nursing and Midwifery Council

Statistical analysis of the register

1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007

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Section 1: Introduction

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) is the UK regulator for two professions, nursing and midwifery. The primary purpose of the NMC is protection of the public. It does this through maintaining a register of all nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses eligible to practise within the UK and by setting standards for their education, training and conduct. Currently the number of registrants exceeds 686,000. The Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 (The Order), sets out the NMC's role and responsibilities.

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

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

The statistics provided in this report cover the year ending 31 March 2007. The new three-part register comprising nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses was opened on 1st August 2004. Historically, the NMC's annual statistics have been based on the fifteen-part register inherited from the NMC's predecessor, the United Kingdom Central Council for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Visiting (UKCC). The NMC no longer publishes information relating to the fifteen-part register as this was replaced by the three-part register.

Please note that fitness to practise statistics will be published in a separate document.

Further information

These statistics are also available on the NMC web site (www.nmc-uk.org).

Section 2: Basic demographic information

This section provides basic demographic information on the register as at 31 March 2007. This includes age and gender breakdowns, geographical distribution, number and type of qualification.

Please note that one-third of nurses and midwives hold more than one registrable or recordable qualification and it is not possible to identify with any degree of certainty which ones they are using in their current practice. For example, a common request made of the NMC is to state how many mental health or children's nurses there are in the UK. Although we can say how many hold the relevant qualification, the NMC cannot confirm whether the relevant qualification is actually used in their current employment.

The exception is for practicing midwives who have to submit an Intention to Practise (ITP) notification to their Local Supervising Authority (LSA). The ITP contains confirmation that midwives have met the requirements of maintaining their registration, their main geographical areas of practice and that they are participating in the process of statutory supervision.

Table 1: Numbers on the register

This section gives the total number of nurses and midwives on the register from 2004, the year in which the three-part register was introduced, together with the number of initial registrations and numbers leaving the register. Please note that as the register is active and dynamic, the total number of nurses and midwives on the register can vary each day due to lapses and renewals of registration. In particular, numbers vary significantly at the end of each month as this is a peak period for registration renewals.

Year ending 31 March	2004	2005	2006	2007
Initial registration	34,617	33,257	31,402	27,704
Nurses/midwives leaving the register who choose not to practise or retire.	19,717	20,840	22,079	23,038
Change over previous year	14,900	12,417	9,323	4,666
Effective register as at 31 March each year	660,480	672,897	682,220	686,886

Table 2: Age distribution of the register

The following table gives an age breakdown of the register since 2004. As can be seen, over 63% of those on the register are over 40 years of age and over 29% are over 50. The age breakdown may reflect changing patterns in the student body, where there are many nursing and midwifery students who could be described as “mature” as opposed to school-leavers. A gradually ageing workforce may be simply a reflection of new career patterns which commonly see people taking up new careers in their 30s and 40s.

Age range in year to 31 March	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %
Under 25 years	2.02	1.94	1.87	1.82
25-29 years	8.44	8.29	8.04	7.69
30-39 years	28.30	27.35	26.72	26.06
40-49 years	33.94	34.42	34.52	34.50
50-54 years	11.62	11.91	12.42	12.99
55 years and over	15.68	16.09	16.40	16.91

Table 3: Gender breakdown of the register

The table below shows the gender balance on the register. Please note the figures below do not include 130 nurses and/or midwives who did not complete the gender field on their application form.

Year ending 31 March	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %
Male	10.63	10.73	10.73	10.73
Female	89.36	89.25	89.24	89.24

Table 4: Geographical breakdown of the register

The latest figures, for the year ending 31st March, are as follows:

Country	2004	2005	2006	2007
England	508,899	520,579	532,016	531,966
Northern Ireland	21,705	21,814	22,833	23,322
Scotland	64,401	64,915	65,350	70,400
Wales	32,443	32,082	32,434	34,814
Non-UK address	28,162	31,310	29,366	26,384

Table 5: Admissions to the register by country/area

The following table shows admissions to the register by country/area and by initial and subsequent entrants in the year to 31 March 2007:

Country/area	Initial entrants	Subsequent entrants*
England	17,270	2115
Scotland	2,497	289
Wales	1,021	145
Northern Ireland	600	94
European Economic Area	1,484	35
Overseas	4,830	36
Total	27,702	2,643

* Subsequent entries are those where the person is already on the register and obtains a further qualification, thus allowing them to enter a different part of the register or for nurses to have an additional field of practice marked on the register.

Table 6: Initial admissions to the register by UK country

This table shows the change in numbers coming onto the register from the UK since 2004. From 2005/2006, the NMC no longer accepts Intention to Practise (ITP) forms from midwives working outside the UK. ITPs have to be signed off by a supervisor of midwives in a Local Supervising Authority (LSA) which are only located in the UK.

Country	2004	2005	2006	2007
England	15,862	16,146	16,848	17,270
Scotland	2,331	2,263	2,434	2,497
Wales	812	1,159	962	1021
Northern Ireland	457	414	696	600
European Economic Area	1,033	1,193	1,753	1,484
Overseas	14,122	11,477	8,709	4,830
Total	34,617	32,652	31,402	27,702

Table 7. Initial admissions to the register by Overseas country 2007

This table provides details of registration statistics for the “top 25” source overseas countries from which nurses and midwives were admitted to the register to 31 March 2007.

Country	Admissions
India	2,436
Philippines	673
Australia	299
Nigeria	258
Pakistan	154
Nepal	148
Zimbabwe	90
China	80
New Zealand	74
Ghana	66
Zambia	53
South Africa	39
Kenya	37
Canada	31
Saudi Arabia	28
Sri Lanka	28
Mauritius	27
Japan	21
USA	21
Sierra Leone	14
Cameroon	11
Iran	10
Uganda	10
Gambia	8
Malaysia	8

Table 8. Initial admissions to the register from the EU/EEA countries

The year 2006-2007 saw the following numbers of admissions to the register from the EU/EEA countries below. Please note Switzerland is not a member of either the EU or EEA.

Country	Admissions
Poland	578
Germany	159
Eire	89
Slovakia	84
Czech Republic	66
Italy	54
Lithuania	47
Spain	41
Sweden	36
Hungary	29
Greece	27
Denmark	24
Finland	24
Netherlands	23
France	21
Austria	20
Portugal	20
Belgium	18
Malta	16
Switzerland	16
Latvia	14
Norway	12
Romania	57
Estonia	7
Bulgaria	25
Cyprus	6
Gibraltar	5
Iceland	2

Table 9. UK nurses and midwives seeking employment outside the UK

Nurses and midwives are part of a professional global workforce. Just as nurses and midwives based within the European Economic Area (EEA) and overseas come to the UK in order to practise, UK trained nurses and midwives also seek employment outside the UK. When a nurse or midwife seeks employment outside the UK, the regulator of the relevant country to which she or he has applied checks with the NMC in order to establish if the applicant is on the NMC register. This process is referred to as verification.

The following table provides details of the number of verification checks made by regulators outside the UK for nurses and midwives on the NMC register. Whilst these statistics may provide an indication of the numbers of nurses and midwives intending to practise outside the UK, it should be noted that it does not necessarily follow that all of those who applied for work outside the UK actually did so.

Country	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Australia	2,708	3,296	3,047	4,764
USA	2,082	1,729	1,338	1,613
New Zealand	980	1,097	1,423	1,336
Eire	916	847	1,009	999
Canada	376	461	404	739
Spain	103	124	132	142
France	74	87	60	56
United Arab Emirates	38	28	18	42
Other	333	375	341	384
Total	7,610	8,044	7,772	10,087

Table 10. Nurses and midwives with a recorded qualification for prescribing

Nurses and midwives are able to obtain additional qualifications that enable them to prescribe medicinal products. The following table provides details of the number of nurses and midwives who recorded a qualification for prescribing in 2006/2007 and the total number who have these qualifications recorded and who are, therefore, able to prescribe at 31st March 2007.

Prescribing qualification	2006/2007
Community practitioner nurse prescribers	1,708
Nurse independent prescribers	35
Nurse independent/supplementary prescribers	3415
Total	5,158

The following table provides details of the total number of nurses and midwives who hold a qualification for prescribing on the register at 31st March 2007.

Total on the register	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Community practitioner nurse prescribers	30,599	31,914	33,069	34,000
Nurse independent prescribers	1,497	1,618	1,653	1,648
Nurse independent/supplementary prescribers	1,457	4,151	7,181	10,750
Total	33,553	37,683	41,903	46,398

Section 3: Nursing

Table 11. Numbers on the nurses' part of the register

There are a number of training routes for nurse students to join the register, sometimes referred to as individual 'branches' of nursing. Please note that the numbers below include nurses who hold more than one qualification and who have therefore been counted more than once. It is for this reason that there is an apparent disparity between the figure of 791,031 and the 686,688 total numbers of nurses and midwives on the register detailed in Table 1.

Branch	2006/2007
Adult	608,008
Mental health	100,050
Children	41,098
Learning disabilities	24,013
General	17,608
Fever	254
Total	791,031

Section 4: Midwifery

Table 12. Number on the midwives' part of the register

The following table provides details of the number of midwives registered at 31st March 2007. Please note that the NMC no longer collects information regarding the numbers of midwives working either part-time or full-time.

Number of Midwives	
Male	134
Female	35,038
Form not filled	5
Total	35,177

Table 13. Number of midwives submitting ITP notifications

The following table provides a breakdown of the number of midwives submitting Intention to Practise (ITP) notifications by country within the UK.

From 2005/2006, the NMC no longer accepts ITPs from midwives working outside the UK. ITPs have to be signed off by a supervisor of midwives in a Local Supervising Authority (LSA) which are only located in the UK.

Country	Total
England	27,770
Northern Ireland	1,380
Scotland	3,938
Wales	1,732
Other	356
Total	35,177

Table 14. Number of practising midwives per Supervisor of Midwives (SOM)

The statistics below show the number of practising midwives per SOM in each country, and in the UK as a whole, for the year ending 31st March 2007. The NMC has a standard of fifteen midwives to one SOM in order to enable SOMs to be more effective in ensuring protection of the public.

Year	England	N Ireland	Scotland	Wales	UK
2004	18	27	21	18	20
2005	14	21	16	15	16
2006	13	24	14	13	14
2007	14	25	14	14	14

Section 5: Specialist community public health nursing

Table 15. Numbers on the specialist community public health nurses' part of the register by field of practice and gender.

The three-part register was opened on 1 August 2004. Migration to the specialist community public health nurses' part of the register has been taking place in phases by different groups, eg; health visitors, when it had been determined that a group had met the standards for entry to this part. At 31 March 2007, the breakdown of the specialist community public health nurses' part of the register was as follows:

Specialist community public health nursing	Female	Male	Total
Family health nurses	46	0	46
Health visitors	24,159	371	24,530
Occupational health nurses	3352	275	3,627
School nurses	2,999	10	3,009
Total	30,556	656	31,212