

The Nursing and Midwifery Council

Statistical analysis of the register

1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

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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 682,000. 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 2006. 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 will no longer be publishing 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). For further information, please contact Craig Turton, Media Relations and Public Affairs Manager, at craig.turton@nmc-uk.org

Section 2: Basic demographic information

This section provides basic demographic information on the register as at 31 March 2006. 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 supervision process.

Table 1: Numbers on the register.

This section gives the total number of nurses and midwives on the register since the inception of the NMC in 2002, together with the number of initial registrations and numbers leaving the register.

Year ending 31 March	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Initial registration	30,693	31,775	34,617	33,257	31,402
Nurses/midwives leaving the register	18,719	30,219	19,717	20,840	25,515
Change over Previous year	11,974	1,556	14,900	12,417	5,887
Effective register as at 31 March each year	644,024	645,580	660,480	672,897	682,220

Table 2: Age distribution of the register

The following table gives an age breakdown of the register since the inception of the NMC in 2002. As can be seen, 63.34% of those on the register are over 40 years of age and approximately 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 ending 31 March	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %
Under 25 years	2.24	2.10	2.02	1.94	1.87
25-29 years	8.86	8.54	8.44	8.29	8.04
30-39 years	30.63	29.37	28.30	27.35	26.72
40-49 years	32.32	33.26	33.94	34.42	34.52
50-54 years	11.46	11.46	11.62	11.91	12.42
55 years and over	14.50	15.27	15.68	16.09	16.40

Table 3: Gender breakdown of the register

The proportion of men on the register broke the 10% “barrier” in 2002 and has continued a long-term upward trend. The table below shows the gradual gender balance change on the register.

Year ending 31 March	2002 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %
Male	10.21	10.48	10.63	10.73	10.73
Female	89.79	89.52	89.36	89.25	89.24

Table 4: Geographical breakdown of the register

The latest figures, for the year ending March 2006, are as follows:

Country	Number on register
England	532,016
Northern Ireland	22,833
Scotland	65,350
Wales	32,434
Non-UK address	29,366

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 2006:

Country/area	Initial entrants	Subsequent entrants*
England	16,848	2,684
Scotland	2,434	435
Wales	962	233
Northern Ireland	696	152
European Economic Area	1,753	29
Overseas	8,709	153
Total	31,402	3,686

* 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 the inception of the NMC in 2002.

Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
England	11,712	14,616	15,862	16,146	16,848
Scotland	1,786	2,238	2,331	2,263	2,434
Wales	647	810	812	1,159	962
Northern Ireland	393	430	457	414	696

Table 7. Initial admissions to the register by Overseas country since 2002.

This table provides details of registration statistics for the “top 25” source overseas countries from which nurses and midwives were admitted to the register since the inception of the NMC in 2002.

Country	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
India	1,830	3,073	3,690	3,551
Philippines	5,593	4,338	2,521	1,541
Australia	920	1,326	981	751
Nigeria	509	511	466	381
South Africa	1,368	1,689	933	378
New Zealand	282	348	289	215
Pakistan	172	140	205	200
Zimbabwe	485	391	311	161
Ghana	251	354	272	154
Zambia	133	169	162	110
USA	88	141	105	98
Guyana	-	-	-	86
Jamaica	-	-	-	78
Canada	52	89	88	75
Nepal	71	43	73	75
Mauritius	59	95	102	71
China	-	-	60	66
Romania	-	-	-	57
Botswana	39	90	91	44
Kenya	152	146	99	41
Malawi	57	64	52	41
Singapore	-	-	28	35
Trinidad&Tobago	-	-	-	32
Japan	20	37	34	30
Lesotho	-	50	43	27
Others	418	514	380	375
TOTAL	12,499	13,608	10,985	8,673

Table 8. Initial admissions to the register from the EU accession countries

The year 2005-2006 saw the following numbers of admissions to the register from the EU countries below.

Country	Admissions
Poland	442
Czech Republic	65
Hungary	63
Slovakia	64
Lithuania	74
Malta	16
Estonia	13
Cyprus	7
Latvia	17
Slovenia	3
Total	764

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	Number of verifications
Australia	3,047
USA	1,338
New Zealand	1,423
Republic of Ireland	1,009
Canada	404
Spain	132
France	60
Saudi Arabia	18
Other	341
Total	7,772

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 2005/2006 and the total number who have these qualifications recorded and who are, therefore, able to prescribe at 31st March 2006.

Prescribing qualification	2005/2006	Total on the register
Community practitioner nurse prescribers	1,751	33,069
Nurse independent prescribers	41	1,653
Nurse independent/supplementary prescribers	2,866	7,181
Total	4,658	41,903

Section 3. Nursing.

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

There exist a number of training routes for nurse students to join the register, sometimes referred to as individual 'branches' of nursing. The NMC's three-part register comprising nurses, midwives and specialist community public health nurses includes a mark that denotes the field of practice of a nurse or midwife as it applies to the qualification obtained.

Branch	Total numbers
Adult	628,512
Mental health	87,739
Children	40,264
Learning disabilities	20,197
Total	776,712

Please note that the numbers above 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 776,712 and the 682,220 total numbers of nurses and midwives on the register detailed in Table 1.

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 2006. 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	163
Female	42,718
Total	42,881

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	Women	Men	Total
England	26,788	101	26,889
Northern Ireland	1,347	0	1,347
Scotland	3,459	5	3,464
Wales	1,661	2	1,663
Total	33,255	108	33,363

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 2006. 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
2002	17	31	20	19	18
2003	not available				
2004	18	27	21	18	20
2005	14	21	16	15	16
2006	13	23.5	14	12.7	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 2006, the breakdown of the specialist community public health nurses' part of the register was as follows:

	Female	Male	Total
Family health nurses (Scotland)	40	0	40
Health visitors	24,583	382	24,965
Occupational health nurses	3,427	271	3,698
School nurses	2,992	5	2,997
Total	31,042	658	31,700