

The UK nursing labour market review 2018

CORPORATE



Each year, the RCN's *Labour Market Review* (LMR) analyses the shape, size and state of the nursing labour market, analysing trends in the employment and training of nursing staff across the UK economy. It attempts to take an objective view of recent trends in an attempt to paint a picture of the current labour market and what this means for both the workforce and for health care provision. However, the nursing labour market is much, much more than a simple supply and demand equation. Not only are the factors influencing supply and demand highly complex, but the impact on health services are profound. Without the right number of nursing staff, we cannot operate safe, effective services.

The LMR provides an analysis of the current nursing workforce, using verifiable data including the numbers of nursing staff leaving and joining the NMC register, the numbers in employment, age profile, earnings and numbers in education. But what is missing is a clear picture of nursing shortages across the UK. While there is some data available from NHS sources, it is difficult to construct an accurate account of the size of the problem and how shortages are affecting different regions or specialities in different ways. It is therefore also difficult to ascertain the extent to which nursing vacancies are being filled by bank and agency staff.

This report does show however, that the number of new entrants to the NMC register is now exceeded by numbers leaving, that the nursing workforce is ageing and that student numbers are not sufficient to match demand. These worrying findings point to the need for long-term investment into the training and development of new nursing staff; investment into the retention of nursing staff through improved working environments and working conditions and the creation of an environment where the contributions of migrant nurses are valued and respected.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. The UK nursing workforce	5
3. The nursing workforce in NHS England, Scotland, Wales and in the Health and Social Care service, Northern Ireland	16
4. General Practice Nursing Workforce	28
5. Nursing and earnings	33
6. Nurse education	37
References	40

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1. Introduction

This report provides a review of the UK nursing labour market, looking at recent data and trends for nursing staff working in the health sector across the UK, drawing out differences and similarities across the four UK countries. The review uses national data sets to estimate the size, shape and composition of the nursing workforce. The review covers:

- the UK nursing workforce across the whole UK economy
- the nursing workforce in NHS England, Scotland, Wales and in Health and Social Care, Northern Ireland
- nursing earnings
- pre-registration education.

The *Labour Market Review* aims to estimate the size, shape and composition of the nursing workforce using Office of National Statistics datasets in addition to data collected by the four UK health departments. It should be noted that datasets often use different terminology, particularly around the definition of nurses and midwives and nursing support staff and data is sometimes collected across different time frames and that these differences have been identified where significant. For example, some data sets refer to registered and others to qualified nurses. Nursing support staff are referred to as nursing assistants and auxiliaries in official data while other definitions are used by different health departments including health care support workers, health care assistant and nursing support staff..

2. The UK nursing workforce

Section 2 starts by looking at data from the NMC Register to look at recent trends in the number of nurses and midwives registered in the UK. All nurses and midwives who practise in the UK must be on the register, however this does not necessarily mean they are working as a nurse or midwife.

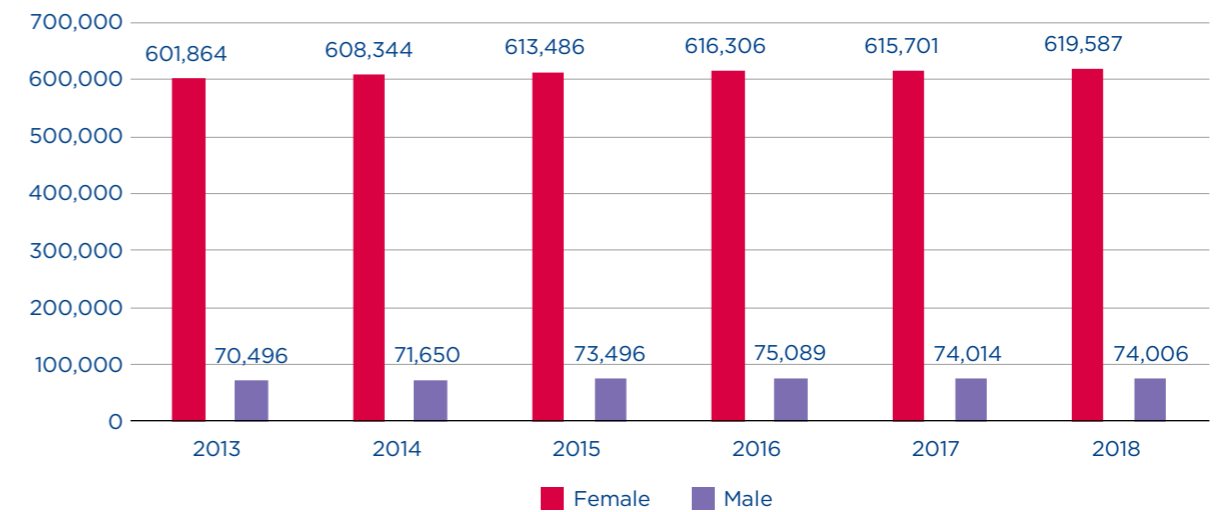
This section goes on to provide an analysis of data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) to estimate both the number of nurses, midwives and nursing assistants working in the UK and where they work. It also provides estimates about the number of nursing staff born outside the UK.

2.1 Nursing and Midwifery Council data

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) data provides the number of nurses and midwives on the NMC register, and shows that there were 693,618 nurses and midwives on the register as of September 2018. This represents an increase of 3,880 (0.6%) since September 2017.¹

Figure 1 shows that 89.3% of all registrants are female and 10.7% are male.

Figure 1: Number of nursing and midwifery registrants by gender 2013 to 2018



Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

* does not include number of registrants whose gender is unknown

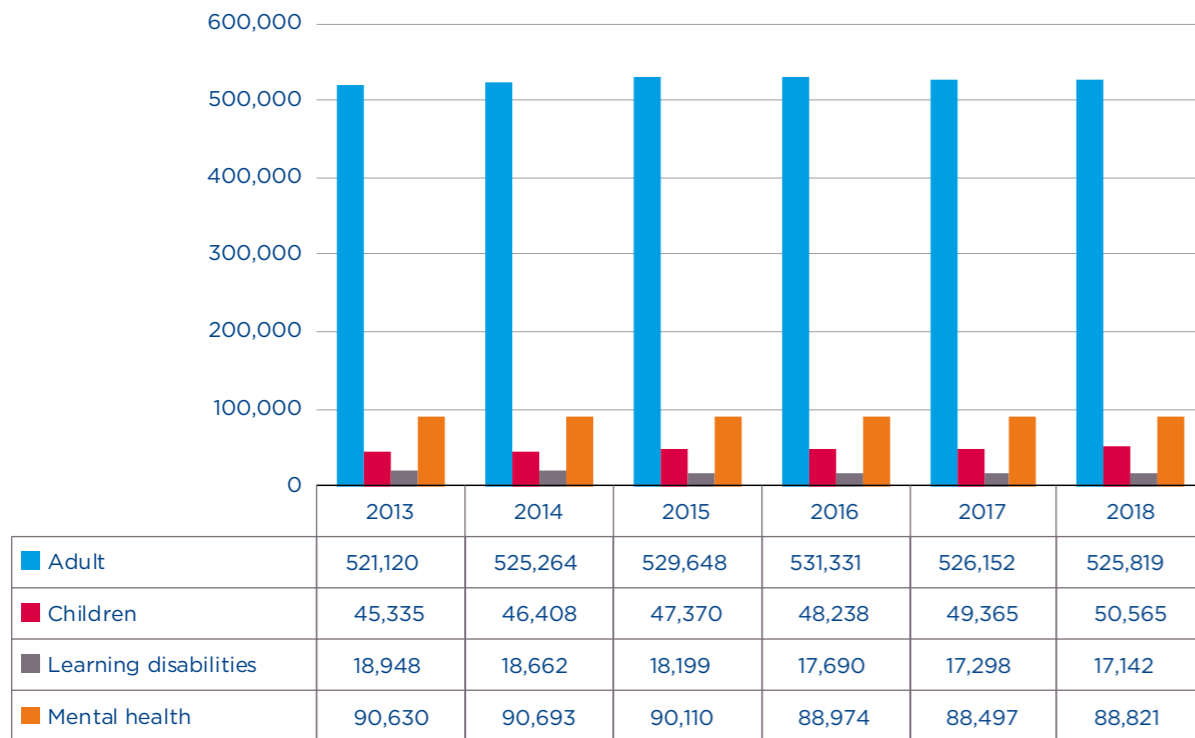
Table 1: Number of nursing and midwifery registrants by registration type 2013 to 2018

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change 2013-2018
Midwife	29,884	31,048	32,117	33,635	35,217	36,409	21.8%
Nurse	631,310	638,364	644,769	648,617	646,243	649,619	2.9%
Nurse and midwife	11,166	10,591	10,115	9,164	8,278	7,590	-32.0%
Specialist Community Public Health Nurse (SCPHN) only	10	6	0	0	0	0	-
TOTAL	672,370	680,009	687,001	691,416	689,738	693,618	3.2%

Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

Figure 2 shows the breakdown of registrants according to their field of practice. It should be noted, however, that one nurse or midwife can register multiple fields of practice. As at September 2018, just over three quarters (77.1%) are registered as adult nurses, 7.4% are registered as children’s nurses, 2.5% are registered as learning disability nurses and 13% as mental health nurses. The most notable changes have seen a contrasting fall in the numbers of learning disability nurses of 9.5% compared to a rise of 11.5% in the number of children’s nurses.

Figure 2: Number of nurses and midwives on NMC register by field of practice

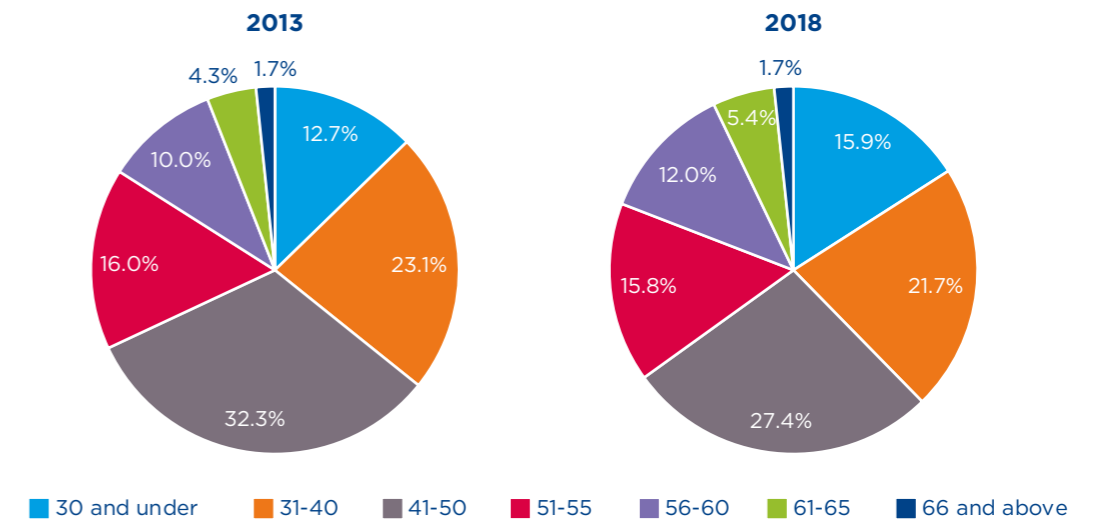


Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

Figure 3 shows the age profile of NMC registrants comparing 2013 to 2018, with the proportion of both younger and older registrants having grown over a relatively short period:

- in 2013, around one in six were aged 56 or over, compared to almost one in five (19%) in 2018
- in 2013, around one in eight (12.7%) were aged 30 or under, compared to 15.9% in 2018.

Figure 3: Registrants by age 2013 compared to 2018

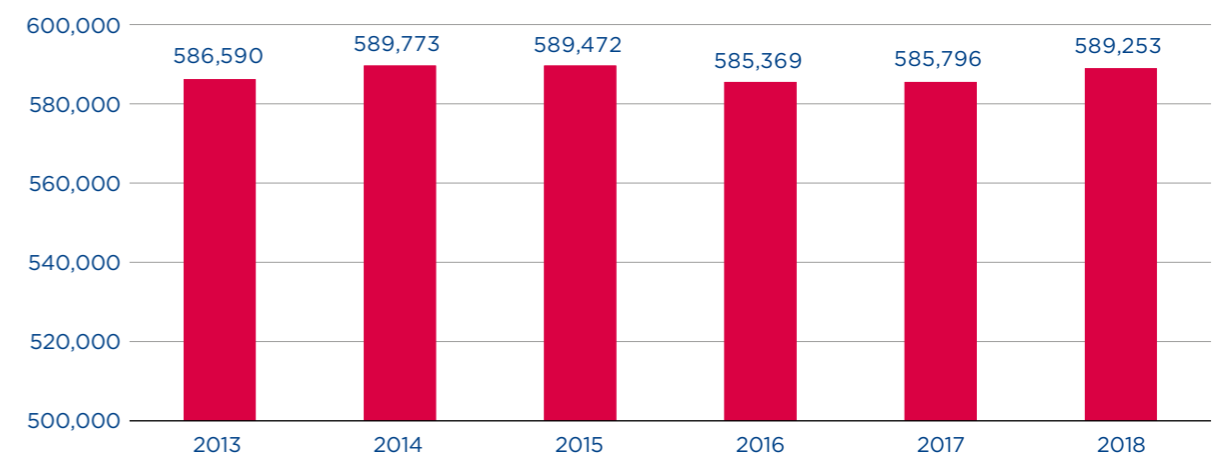


Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

Figures 4 and 5 show the numbers of registrants according to their country of registration. Figure 4 shows that of the total number of registrants, 589,253 (85%) are nurses and midwives first registered in the UK.

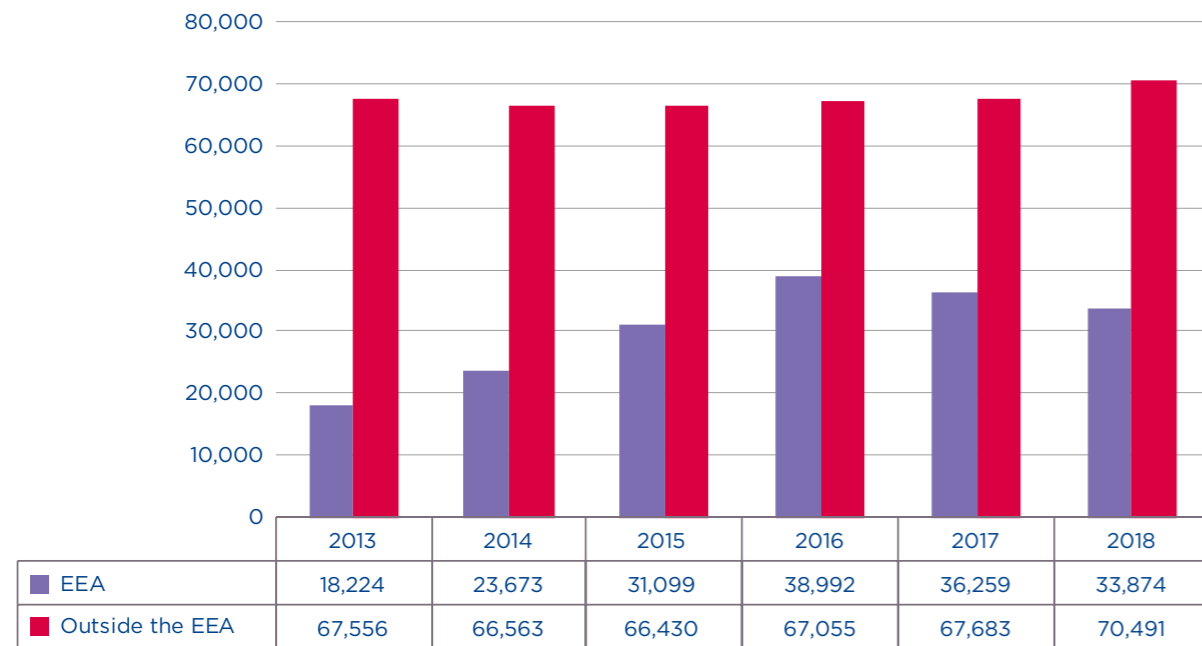
Figure 5 shows there are a further 33,874 (4.9%) nurses and midwives who trained in the EU or European Economic Area (EEA) and registered to work in the UK. In addition 70,491 (10.2%) are nurses and midwives first registered outside the EEA.

Figure 4: Number of nurses and midwives on NMC register, first registered in the UK



Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

Figure 5: Number of nurses and midwives on NMC register, first registered in the EEA and outside the EEA



Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

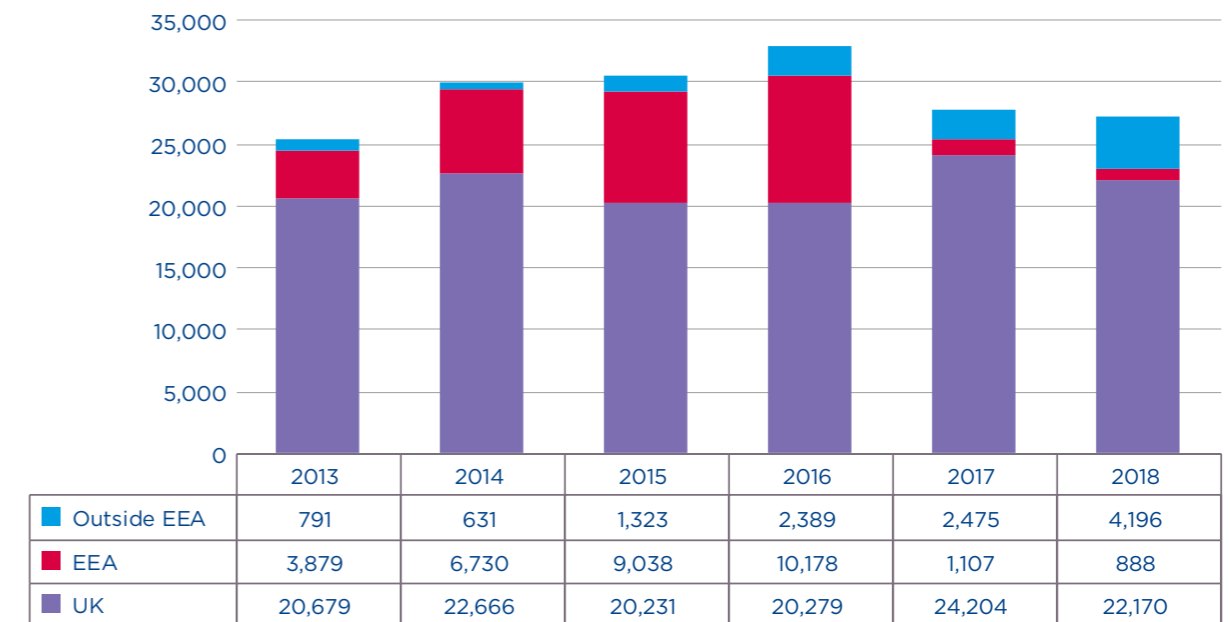
2.1.2 NMC new entrants

Looking at new entrants to the NMC register, the overall number (including UK, EEA and non-EEA registrants) stood at 27,254 in 2018 – a fall of 22% from 2016.

- Number of UK new entrants: 22,170 (81.3%)
- Number of EEA new entrants: 888 (3.3%)
- Number of non-EEA new entrants: 4,196 (15.4%)

Figure 6 shows that the number of new entrants to the register from the UK has fallen by 16% in the twelve months to September 2018. The number of entrants from the EEA tripled between 2013 and 2016, then subsequently fell by over 9,000 between 2016 and 2018. Meanwhile, the number of new registrants from outside the EEA has increased six-fold between 2013 and 2018.

Figure 6: Number of new entrants to the UK nursing register (2013 to 2018)



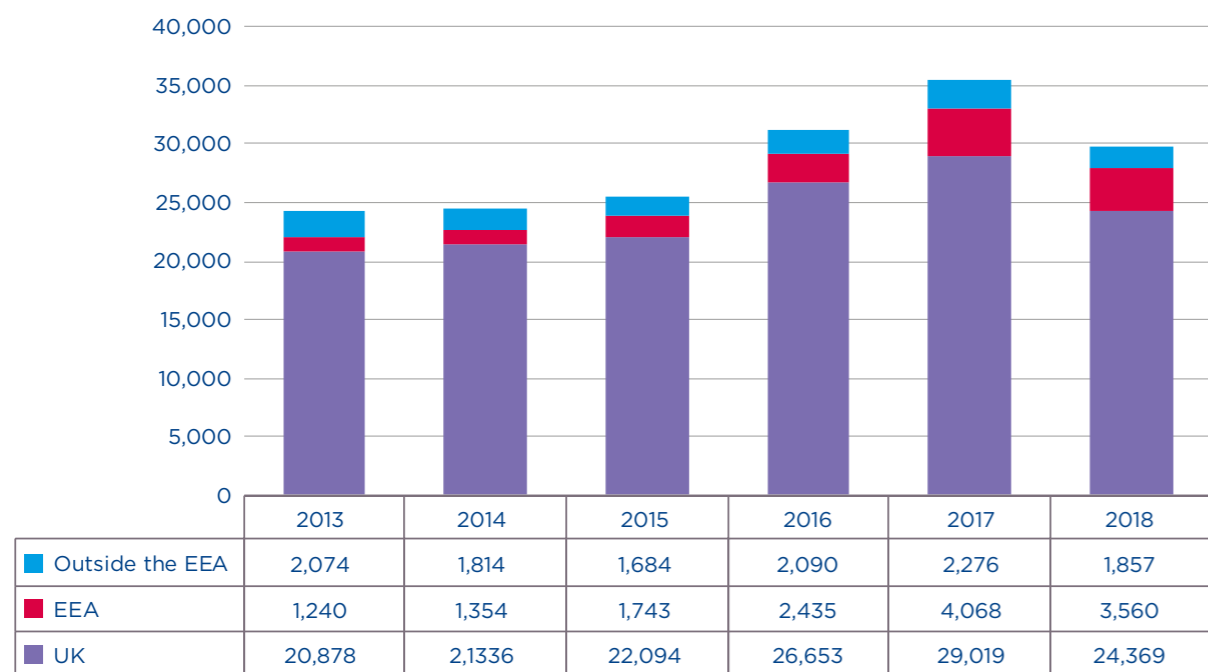
Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

2.1.3 Numbers leaving the NMC register

In total, the number of people leaving the NMC increased has dropped over the last year, but still remains 23.1% higher than in 2013. In 2018, 29,786 registrants left the register which included:

- 24,369 (81.8%) who initially registered in the UK
- 3,560 (12%) initially registered in the EEA
- 1,857 (6.2%) from outside the EEA.

Figure 7: Number of leavers from the UK nursing register (2013 to 2018)



Source: Nursing and Midwifery Council

In summary, in the twelve months to September 2018 there were 2,532 more leavers than joiners and looking at the different categories, there were:

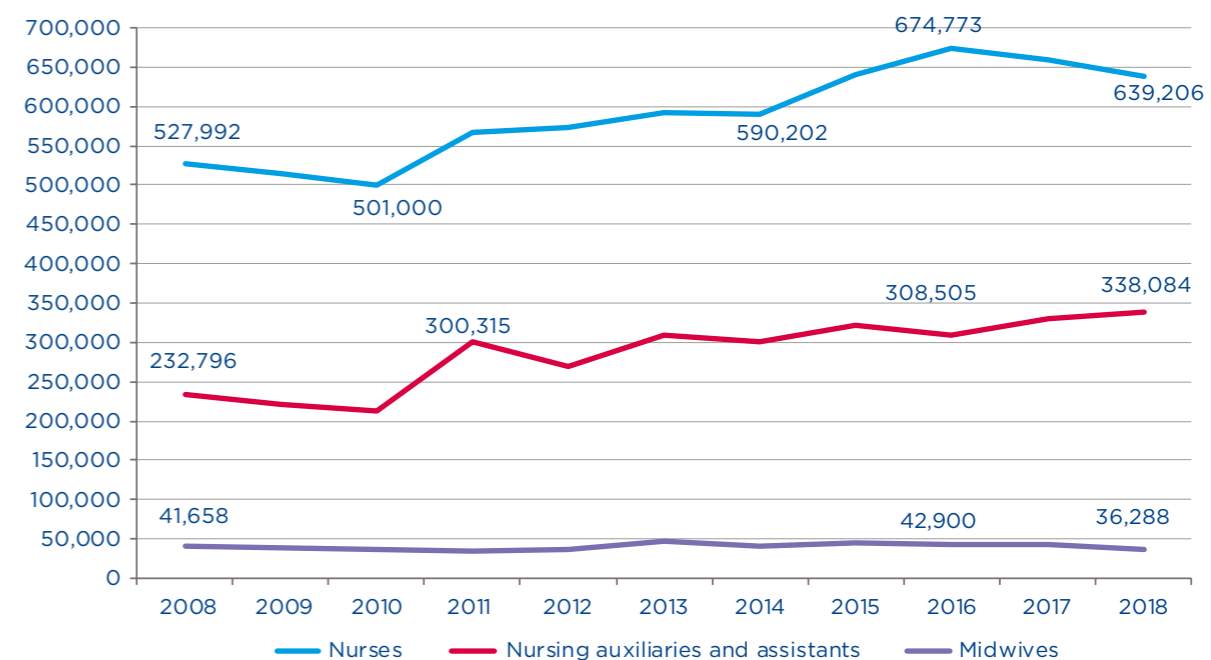
- 2,199 more UK leavers than joiners
- 2,672 more EEA leavers than joiners
- 2,339 more joiners than leavers among registrants from outside the EEA.

2.2 Labour Force Survey data

This section provides an analysis of figures from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) which provides official measures of employment and unemployment for the UK. It gives an indication of the number of nurses, nursing assistants and auxiliaries and midwives working across the UK economy (as defined by the Office for National Statistics).

The LFS provides an estimation of the size of individual sectors as defined by standard industrial classification (SIC) codes and the number of people working in given occupations as defined by standard occupation classification (SOC) codes – in this case nurses², nursing auxiliaries and assistants³ and midwives.⁴

Figure 8: Nurses, nursing assistants/auxiliaries and midwives in employment (2008-2018)



Source: Analysis of Labour Force Surveys April-June 2008-2018

Figure 8 shows an overall increase in the number of nurses between 2008 and 2018 of 21.1%. However, numbers have started to fall since 2016. There were estimated to be around 639,206 people in employment in the occupational category of nurse in 2018 – a fall of 5.3% since 2016.

There are an estimated 338,084 people in employment in the category of nursing auxiliaries and assistants in the UK in 2018, representing a rise of 45% since 2008. There has been a rise of 9.6% between 2016 and 2018.

Looking at midwives, there are estimated to be around 36,288 people in employment in this category in the UK in 2018, having fallen by 12.9% since 2008. Between 2016 and 2018, there has been a fall of 15.4% in the number of midwives in employment.

The total number of people in employment in the UK rose by 9.6% from around 29.5 million to 32.3 million between 2008 and 2018.

Figures 9 and 10 provide an analysis of LFS data for nursing staff in employment according to sector of work. They show that the majority of both nurses (75.9%) and nursing auxiliaries/assistants (65.1%) work for health authorities or NHS trusts/boards. Around one in six nurses and one in five nursing auxiliaries/assistants work in the private or independent sector.⁵

Figure 9: Nurses and midwives in employment and sector of work (2018)

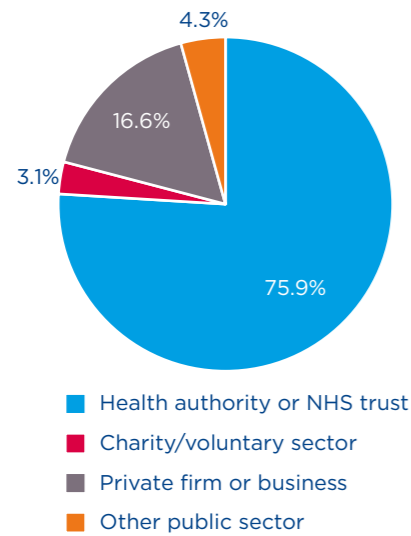
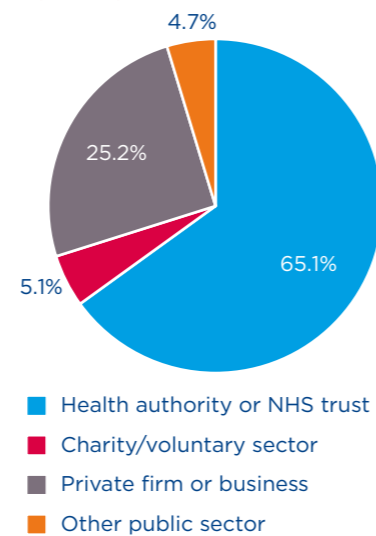


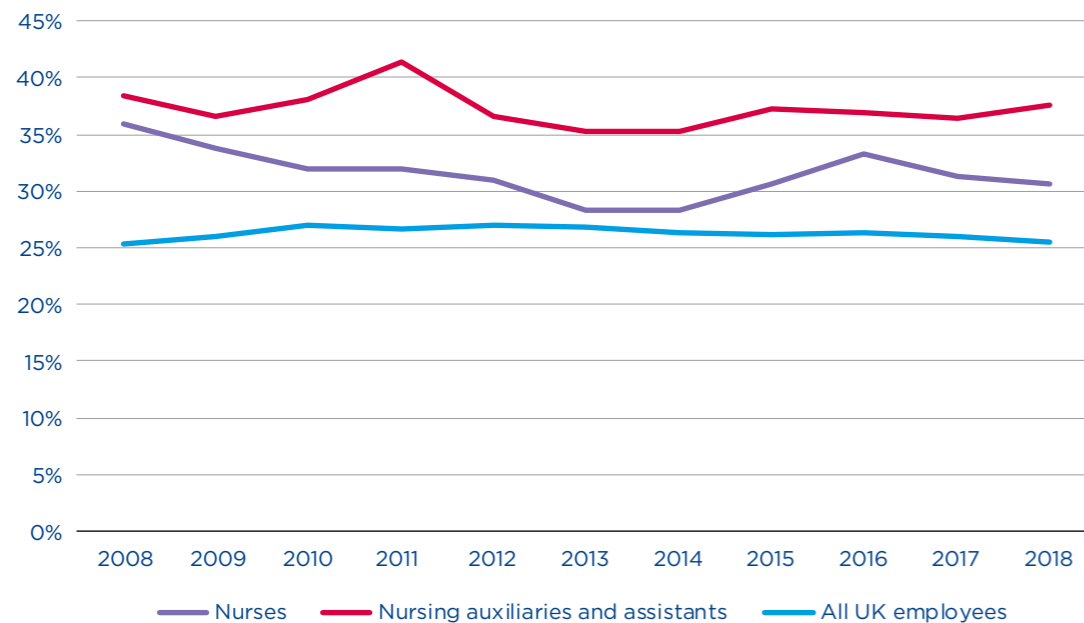
Figure 10: Nursing auxiliaries and assistants in employment and sector of work (2018)



Source: Analysis of Labour Force Survey April - June 2018

Source: Analysis of Labour Force Survey April - June 2018

Figure 11: Proportion of nurses, nursing auxiliaries/assistants and all UK employees working part-time (2008-2018)



Source: Analysis of the Labour Force Survey 2008-2018

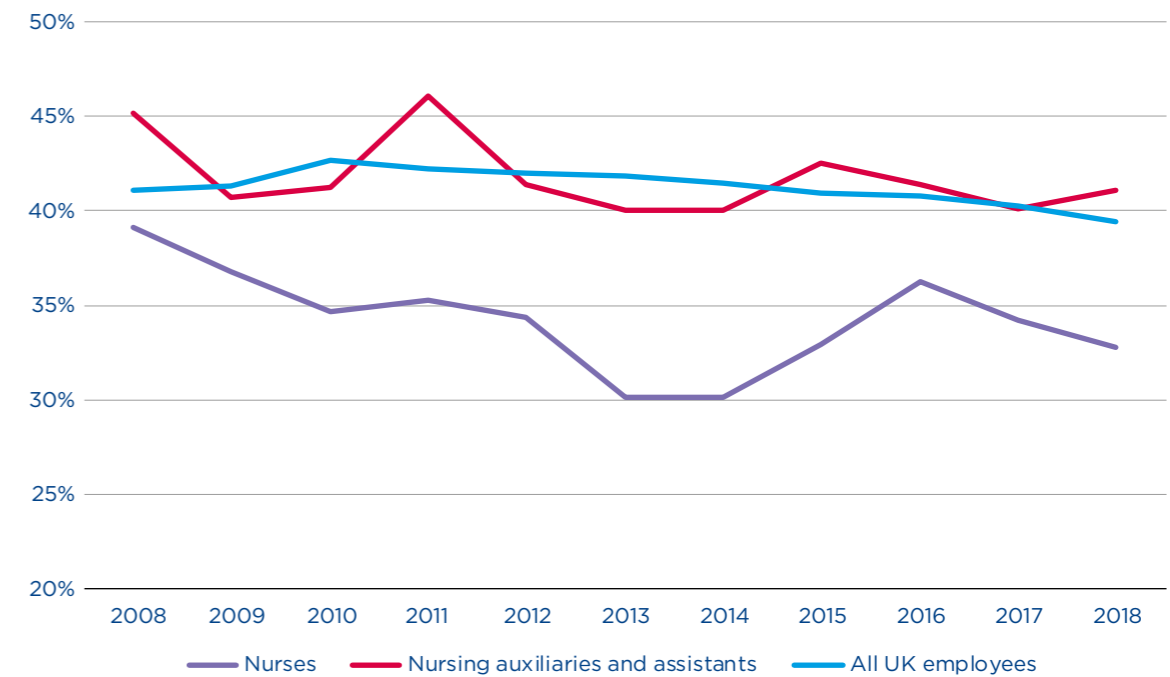
Figure 11 shows estimates of part-time working among the nursing workforce in employment (excluding self-employed) as compared to the whole UK working population.⁶

In 2008, over a third (36%) of nurses reported working part-time, dropping to 28% in 2013 and then moving back up to 31% in 2018.

Among nursing auxiliaries and assistants, 38% reported working part-time in 2008, declining to 35% in 2013 and returning 38% in 2018.

The chart shows that part-time working is clearly more common in the nursing workforce than the workforce as a whole with a quarter of all UK employees reporting they worked part-time in 2018, which is likely explained by the high proportion of women in the workforce.

Figure 12: Proportion of female nurses, female nursing auxiliaries/assistants and all female UK employees working part-time (2008-2018)



Source: Analysis of the Labour Force Survey 2008-2018

Figure 12 concentrates on the prevalence of part-time working solely in the female workforce, due to the high proportion of women in the health and social care workforce (around 88% of nurses and 81% of nursing auxiliaries and assistants in employment are female) as well the higher rate of part-time working among women in general.

Among all female employees in the UK, part-time working is higher than among men. In 2018, two fifths (39%) of all women reported working part-time compared to 12% of men.

Looking at nurses in employment, the rate of part-time working among the female workforce fell from 39% to 30% between 2008 and 2013. Since then the rate has returned to 33% in 2018.

It is difficult to discern an overall trend in the rate of part-time working among the female nursing auxiliaries and assistant workforce, with almost annual shifts over the last 10 years, starting at 45% in 2008 and finishing at 41% in 2018.

2.3 Country of birth

This section includes an analysis of Labour Force Survey (LFS) data, looking at responses from respondents who report working as nurses, midwives or nursing auxiliaries and assistants and their country of birth. This analysis includes people who became UK nationals after moving to the UK and people who were born abroad to UK national parents and therefore may be slightly higher than other estimates. However, this gives an indication of both the level of reliance on EU and non-EU nationals among health and social care providers and recent trends in numbers.

There are key differences in this data and the NMC data which presents the number of registered nurses and midwives who registered abroad. Since the Labour Force Survey asks respondents about their country of birth, there are therefore methodological differences between the data analysed and presented.

Across all providers, there are an estimated 22.4% of the nursing and midwifery workforce who were born outside the UK, compared to 21.4% in 2016. In the nursing auxiliary and assistant workforce, 21.1% were born outside the UK, compared to 19.7% in 2016.

Table 2: Country of birth as percentage of occupational groupings

	All sectors		NHS		Private firms	
	EU %	Non-EU %	EU %	Non-EU %	EU %	Non-EU %
Registered nurses and midwives	5.7	16.7	5.2	16.2	9.4	21.2
Nursing auxiliaries and assistants	5.1	16.0	4.6	17.8	5.9	16.1

Source: Analysis of Labour Force Survey, April-June 2018

Table 3: Country of birth as percentage of registered nurses and midwives in employment, 2016 and 2018

		2016 %	2018 %
		All sectors	UK
	EU	6.3	5.7
	Non-EU	15.1	16.7
NHS	UK	78.7	78.6
	EU	6.3	5.2
	Non-EU	15.0	16.2
Other public sector	UK	77.8	84.9
	EU	6.4	2.7
	Non-EU	15.7	12.4
Private firms	UK	77.9	69.4
	EU	6.6	9.4
	Non-EU	15.5	21.2

Source: Analysis of Labour Force Survey, April-June 2016 and April-June 2018

Table 4: Country of birth as percentage of nursing auxiliary and assistants in employment, 2016 and 2018

		2016 %	2018 %
		All sectors	UK
	EU	4.6	5.1
	Non-EU	15.1	16.0
NHS	UK	81.1	77.6
	EU	5.6	4.6
	Non-EU	13.3	17.8
Other public sector	UK	86.1	89.4
	EU	2.8	6.4
	Non-EU	11.1	4.3
Private firms	UK	75.8	78.0
	EU	2.0	5.9
	Non-EU	22.2	16.1

Source: Analysis of Labour Force Survey, April-June 2016 and April-June 2018

2.3.1 European nationals in the nursing workforce

Analysis of the data suggests that the country of birth for an estimated 5.7% of all nurses and midwives in the UK workforce is within another EU country. This represents a fall from 6.3% of the nurse and midwife workforce since 2016 when the UK voted to leave the European Union. This drop is consistent with drop in numbers of EEA nationals on the NMC register as reported in section 2.1.

In addition, the country of birth of an estimated 5.1% of nursing auxiliaries and assistants in the UK workforce is reported as within another EU country in 2018 compared to 4.6% in 2016.

For nurses and midwives working for a health authority or NHS trust/board, the proportion born in another EU country is estimated at 5.2%, representing a reduction of 1.1 percentage points since 2016. The proportion of nursing assistants and auxiliaries working in the NHS and born in another EU country is 4.6% this year, compared to 5.6% in 2016.

The figures are higher for private firms, with 9.4% of nurses and midwives and 5.9% of nursing auxiliaries and assistants born in another EU country.

3. The nursing workforce in NHS England, Scotland, Wales and in the Health and Social Care service, Northern Ireland

Section 3.1 looks at trends in the nursing workforce across the four UK countries between 2011 and 2017.⁷ While services are often referred to as the NHS they are mostly independent from each other and operate under different management, rules, and political authority.

This timeframe has been used to allow for consistent comparison of data; the most recent data which allows comparison is 2017.

This analysis also takes into account methodological changes made by NHS Digital in England, which is responsible for the provision of NHS workforce data. These methodological changes have involved the re-categorisation of the workforce, which in turn impacts on the comparability with previously published workforce numbers which have been used in previous editions of the RCN's *Labour Market Review*.

All efforts have been made to ensure consistency between measures but there are variations in definitions and methods of data collection between the different countries. Although data may not be fully comparable between countries, we can see a general upward trend in the registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting workforce and among health care assistant/health care support workers workforce since 2011.

The rest of this chapter looks in greater depth at workforce trends within the four UK countries and uses different time frames according to the availability of published data to provide the most up-to-date analysis as possible.

3.1 Comparison of workforce data across the UK

Table 5: Full-time equivalent (FTE) and percentage change in the NHS, all staff groups, 2011, 2016-2017, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

	2011	2016	2017	% change 2011-2017	% change 2016-2017
England	993,466	1,027,100	1,052,936	6.0%	2.5%
Scotland	131,340	138,651	139,492	6.2%	0.6%
Wales	71,836	76,288	77,917	8.5%	2.1%
Northern Ireland	51,189	54,962	55,948	8.8%	1.8%

Table 6: Full-time equivalent (FTE) and percentage change in the NHS registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting workforce, 2011, 2016-2017, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

	2011	2016	2017	% change 2011-2017	% change 2016-2017
England	296,925	305,326	305,059	2.7%	-0.1%
Scotland	41,495	43,043	43,252	4.2%	0.5%
Wales	21,686	22,436	22,582	4.1%	0.6%
Northern Ireland	13,655	14,920	14,899	10.8%	-0.1%

Table 7: Full-time equivalent (FTE) and percentage change in the NHS health care assistant/health care support worker workforce, 2011, 2016-2017, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

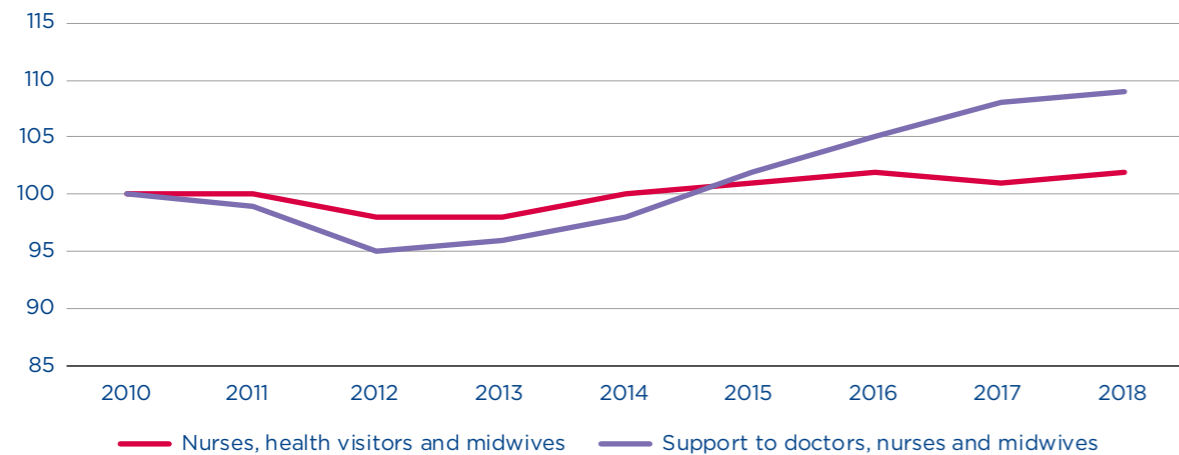
	2011	2016	2017	% change 2011-2017	% change 2016-2017
England	131,227	145,848	149,458	13.9%	2.5%
Scotland	14,724	16,051	16,097	9.3%	0.3%
Wales	6,294	6,952	6,942	10.3%	-0.3%
Northern Ireland	3,856	4,202	4,303	10.3%	4.6%

Notes on tables 6 and 7:

- **England 2011, 2016-2017.**⁸ Table 6 figures are FTE registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff in hospital and community services. Table 7 figures are nursing support staff
- **Scotland 2011, 2016-2017.**⁹ Table 6 figures are nursing and midwifery staff, bands 5–9 in NHS Scotland. Table 7 figures are 1–4 nursing and midwifery staff.
- **Wales 2011, 2016-2017.**¹⁰ Table 6 figures are FTE registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff and nursing support staff in hospitals and the community excluding nursing assistant practitioner, nursery nurse, nursing assistant/auxiliary, nurse learner – pre registration, and nurse learner – post 1st level. Table 7 figures are FTE nursing assistant practitioner, nursery nurse, nursing assistant/auxiliary, nurse learner – pre-registration, and nurse learner – post 1st level.
- **Northern Ireland 2011, 2016-2017.**¹¹ Table 6 figures are FTE registered nursing and midwifery staff in the health and social care workforce. Table 7 figures are FTE nurse support staff.

3.2 NHS England nursing workforce

Figure 13: Registered nursing and midwifery staff (FTE); health care/nursing assistants (2010-2018) - Index change: 2010 = 100



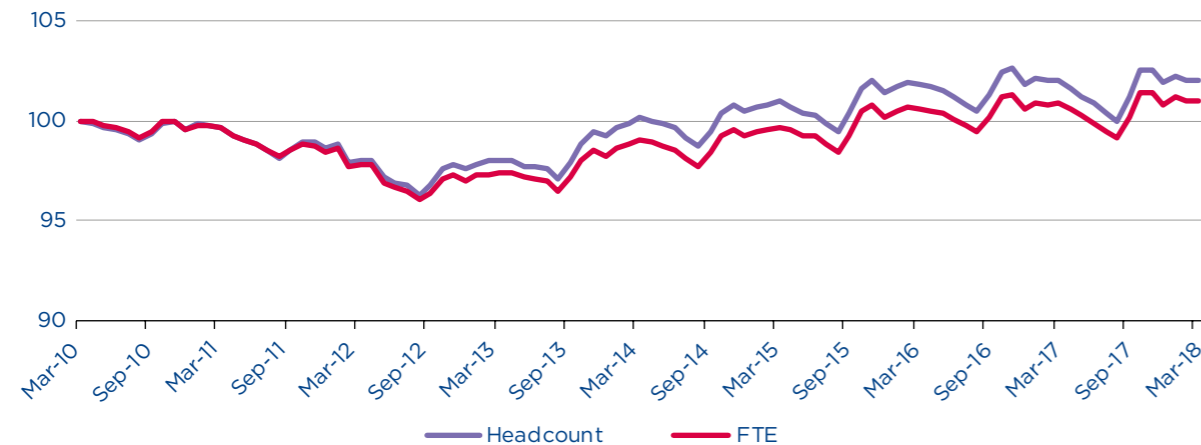
Source: NHS Digital

Figure 13 shows the trend in registered nursing and midwifery staff and non-registered nursing staff in the NHS in England between 2010 and 2018.

There has been a small overall increase of 2% in the FTE number of registered nurses and midwives between 2010 and 2018.

There has been an overall increase of 9% increase in the numbers of health care assistants and nursing assistants/auxiliaries between 2010 and 2018. However, this conceals an initial downward trend between 2010 and 2012 of 4.6%.

Figure 14: NHS England, monthly staffing, registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting (FTE and headcount) 2010-2018 - Index change: 2010 = 100



Source: NHS Digital

Figure 14 compares the monthly trend of headcount and full-time equivalent staffing figures between 2010 and 2018. Numbers of registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff have struggled to return to 2010 levels, when the headcount stood at 342,965 and the FTE workforce was 301,399 in March that year.

Between 2010 and 2018, the overall shows that the FTE workforce grew by 1% while the number measured by headcount grew by just 2%. As at March 2018, the headcount workforce was 346,293 and FTE workforce stood at 307,535.

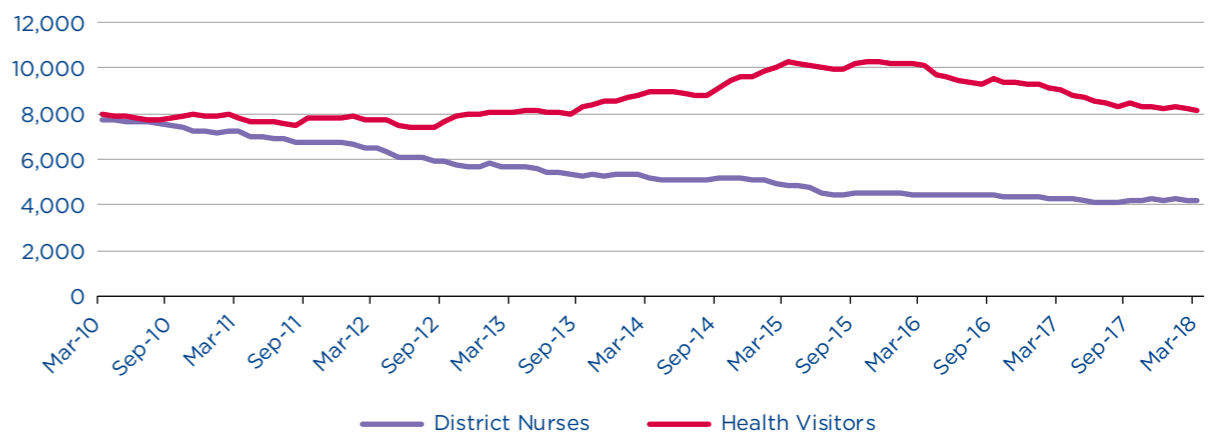
Table 8 looks at the main work areas across the registered nursing workforce since 2014, to show changes in the composition of the FTE workforce over this period. There has been increases in the workforce in children's nursing (13.8%), and adult nursing (3.8%), but drops in all other areas including community nursing (3.4%), health visiting (8.4%), learning disabilities/difficulties (16.7%) and mental health nursing (4.1%).

Table 8: England, registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff (FTE) by work area (2014-2018)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2014-2018
All	301,914	304,360	306,851	307,491	307,535	1.9%
Adult	173,383	175,337	177,716	179,784	179,941	3.8%
Children's nursing	19,683	20,529	21,268	21,915	22,406	13.8%
Community health	36,605	36,018	36,260	35,442	35,377	-3.4%
Mental health	37,591	36,543	35,844	35,688	36,053	-4.1%
Health visitors	8,926	10,257	10,144	9,087	8,172	-8.4%
Learning disabilities/difficulties	3,969	3,656	3,542	3,444	3,305	-16.7%
Other	678	655	613	534	491	-27.6%
Midwives	21,079	21,365	21,464	21,597	21,790	3.4%

Figure 15 looks in more detail at community nursing and at the number of health visitors and district nurses in particular. This shows that while the FTE number of health visitors and district nurses started at similar levels in 2010, the number of district nurses has almost halved, while the number of health visitors grew by 27% between 2010 and 2015, peaking at just over 10,100. However, since then, the number has dropped back to 2010 levels.

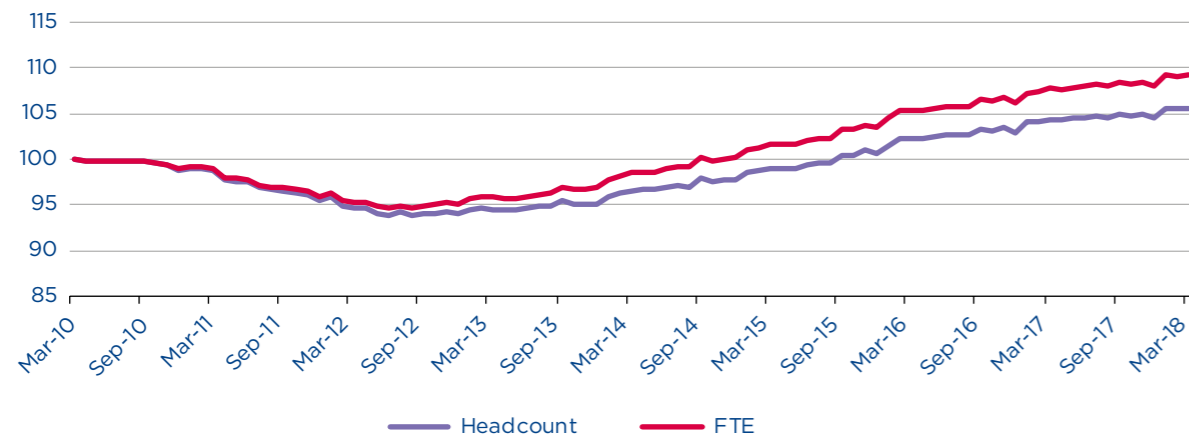
Figure 15: England, registered nursing workforce (FTE), health visitors and district nurses 2010-2018



Source: NHS Digital

Figure 16 shows the overall trend in the nursing assistant workforce, with the headcount having risen by 5.5% and the FTE workforce rising by 9.2% between 2010 and 2018.

Figure 16: NHS England, monthly staffing, support to doctors and nurses (FTE and headcount) 2010-2018 - Index change: 2010 = 100



Source: NHS Digital

3.2.1 New nursing roles and routes in nursing

A new role of nursing associate has been introduced in England, designed to bridge the gap between health care assistants (HCAs) and registered nurses and to address urgent workforce shortages.

There are currently around 2,000 trainee nursing associates (TNAs), with the first set to qualify early in 2019 following two years of training at 35 sites around the country. The government has stated that it anticipates that 5,000 will begin training this year, with 7,500 due to begin from the end of January 2019.

By the end of the programme, associates will have gained a level 5 qualification, equivalent to a foundation degree and will join a new nursing associate section of the NMC register.

In addition, nurse apprenticeships were introduced in 2017 and are designed as an alternative to traditional nursing courses, with participants spending part of their time at university and the other part with their employer.

The introduction of nurse apprenticeships has coincided with major changes to funding for student nurses on traditional pre-registration degree courses, who no longer receive bursaries and instead have to take out a loan to cover tuition and living costs.

Initial provision has proven to be small - the House of Commons Education Committee has reported that there were around 30 starters across two universities in 2017. The Government's target is for 400 nursing associates to progress to degree apprenticeships from 2019.

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmeduc/1017/101702.htm>

3.2.2 Independent sector health care providers

Table 9 provides data on the nursing workforce directly employed by independent sector health care providers where services have been commissioned from the NHS. However, due to different methodologies in collecting data, there are limitations in the extent to which numbers can be compared with the NHS.

This shows that outside NHS directly provided services, there are just over 12,000 nurses, health visitors and midwives and just over 7,000 nursing support staff working in NHS-commissioned services.

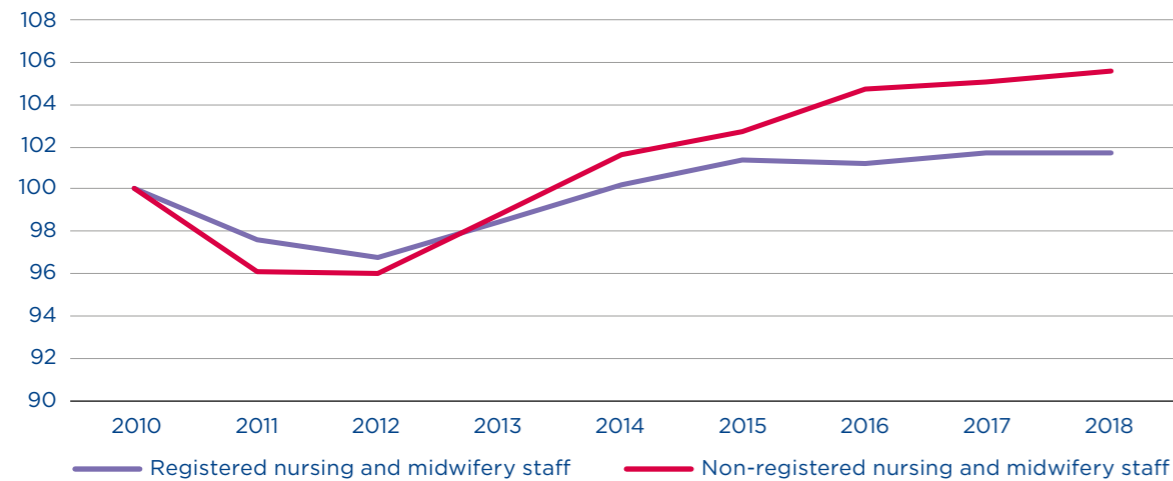
Table 9: Registered nurses, health visitors and midwives; nursing support staff (FTE) 2016-2018

	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018	% change 2016-2018
Nurses, health visitors and midwives	12,343	11,200	12,172	-1.4
Nursing support staff	7,057	7,196	7,156	1.4

Source: NHS Digital

3.3 NHS in Scotland

Figure 17: Scotland, registered and non-registered nursing and midwifery staff (FTE) 2010-2018 - Index change: 2010=100



Source: Information Services Division, Scotland

Figure 17 shows the related patterns of growth in the registered and non-registered nursing and midwifery workforce in NHS Scotland between 2010 and 2018.

Among the registered nursing and midwifery workforce, numbers of FTE staff fell by 3.2% between 2010 and 2012 followed by a recovery and rising to 43,268 in 2018.

The non-registered nursing and midwifery workforce followed a similar trend, falling by 4.0% over the same period, before rising to 16,178 in 2018.

Looking at the headcount and FTE trends in the registered nurse workforce in Figure 18, this shows a similar picture to England (Figure 15), with the full-time equivalent workforce growing faster than headcount. The FTE measure grew by 1.8% while headcount grew by 0.5% between 2010 and 2018.

Figure 18: Scotland, registered nursing and midwifery staff (FTE and headcount) 2010-2018 - Index change: 2010=100

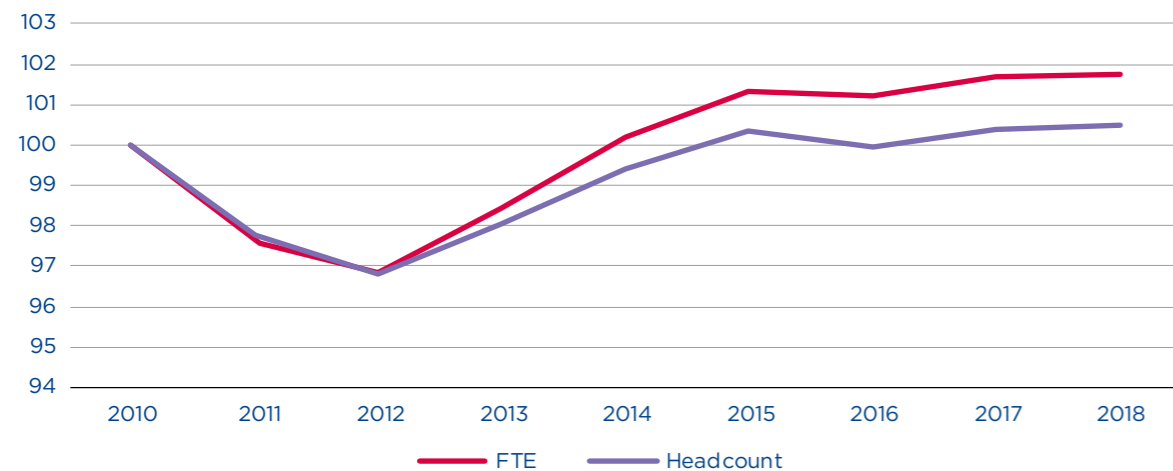


Table 10 provides a breakdown for selected work areas. Between September 2015 and September 2018, there has been minimal overall change in adult nursing, with the largest increase seen in health visiting. However, there has been a downward trend in other areas of the workforce, with learning disabilities nursing, paediatric nursing, mental health nursing, midwifery and district nursing seeing reductions in staffing.¹²

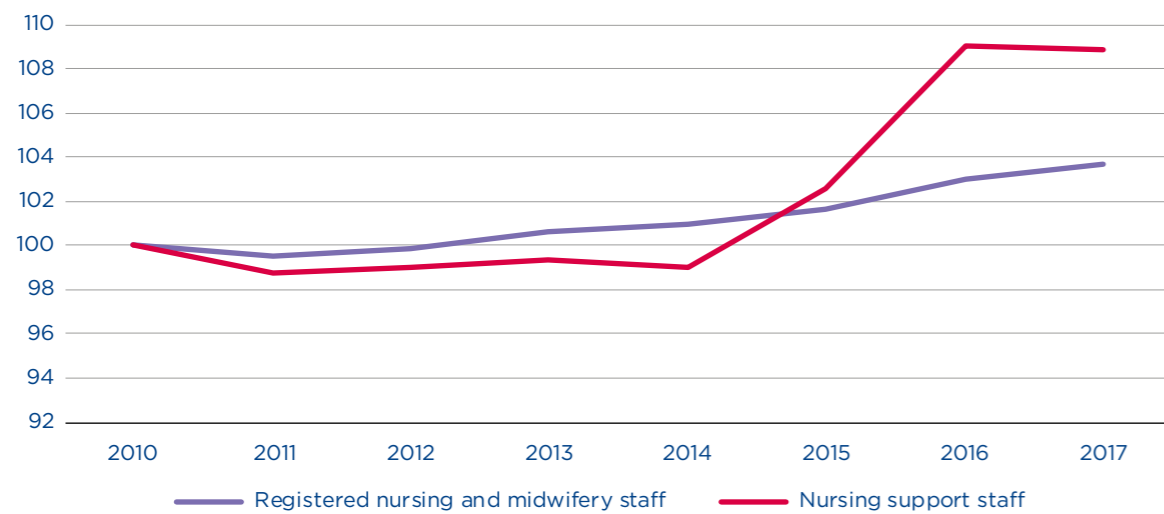
Table 10: NHS Scotland registered nursing staff by selected work area, 2015-18.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change Sep 2015- Sep 2018
All	43,121	43,043	43,252	43,268	0.3%
Adult	23,867	23,702	23,862	23,999	0.6%
Mental health	6,615	6,500	6,468	6,387	-3.4%
District nursing	2,855	2,866	2,809	2,800	-1.9%
Midwifery	2,440	2,353	2,387	2,373	-2.7%
Paediatric	1,654	1,580	1,527	1,512	-8.6%
Health visiting	1,634	1,739	1,861	1,900	16.3%
Specialist nursing	1,107	1,147	1,207	1,263	14.1%
Learning disabilities	692	675	641	627	-9.4%
Public health nursing	525	496	446	411	-7.3%

Source: Information Services Division, Scotland

3.3 NHS in Wales

Figure 19: Wales, registered nursing and midwifery staff and nursing support staff (FTE) 2010-2017. Index change 2010=100

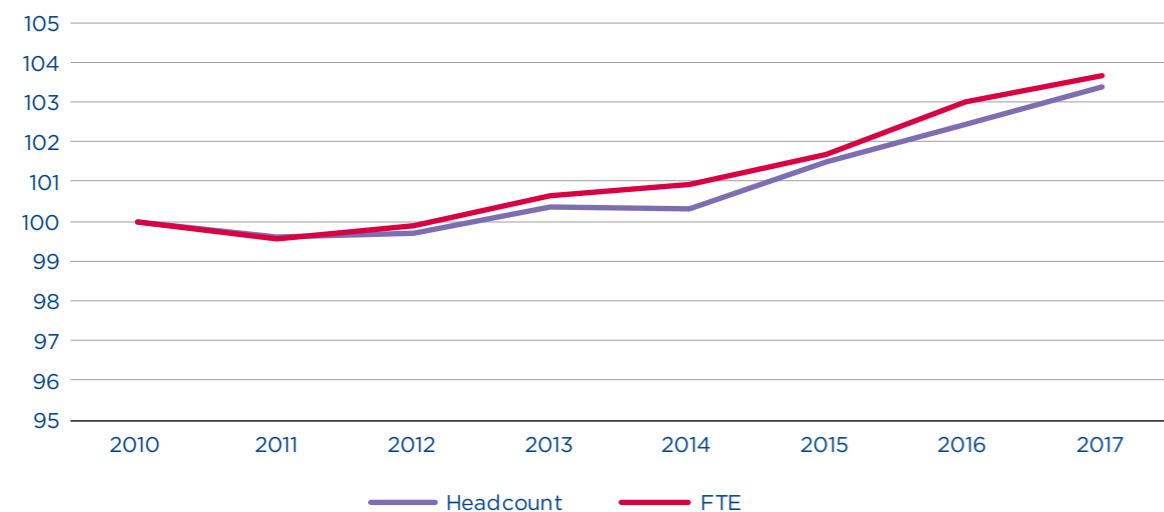


Source: StatsWales, Welsh Government

Figure 19 shows that that number of registered nursing and midwifery staff has grown by 3.7% from 21,783 (FTE) in 2010 to 22,582 in 2017, while the nursing support workforce dropped from 6,374 (FTE) in 2010 to 6,313 in 2014 (1%) before rising to 6,952 in 2016 and levelling off at 6,942 in 2017.

Figure 20 compares the trend in headcount to full-time equivalent in the registered nursing and midwifery workforce between 2010 and 2017 and shows similar, limited growth with an increase of 3.4% in headcount and 3.7% in the FTE measure.

Figure 20: Wales, registered nursing and midwifery staff (FTE and headcount) 2010-2017. Index change 2010=100



Source: StatsWales, Welsh Government

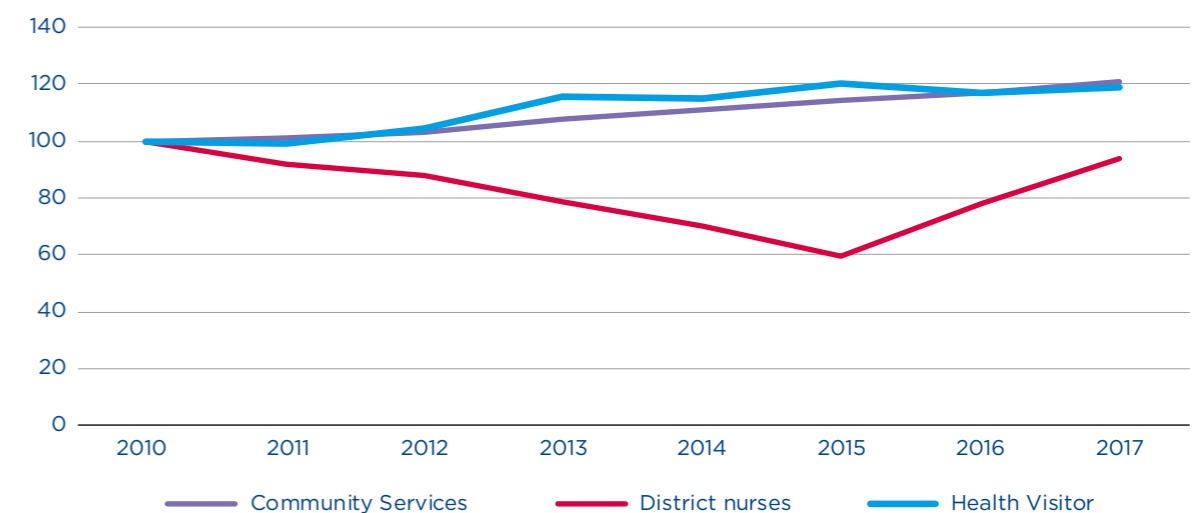
Table 11: Wales, nursing and midwifery staff (FTE) by work area (2013-2017)

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% change 2013-2017
Acute, elderly and general	15,937	15,891	16,181	16,650	16,601	4.2
Community services ¹³	3,695	3,808	3,915	4,017	4,156	12.5
Community learning disabilities	281	281	284	270	274	-2.6
Other learning disabilities	452	444	448	432	416	-8.0
Community psychiatry	1,339	1,337	1,376	1,421	1,535	14.7
Other psychiatry	3,064	3,036	2,951	2,957	2,904	-5.2
Maternity services	1,658	1,649	1,650	1,685	1,677	1.2
Paediatric nursing	1,033	1,084	1,128	1,159	1,158	12.1
Neonatal nursing	439	428	418	427	447	1.8
School nursing	207	222	222	233	239	15.7

Source: StatsWales. Nursing staff by grade and year 2013-2017

Table 11 shows the FTE nursing and midwifery workforce in Wales by work area in the five years to 2017. While the two biggest areas of the workforce saw steady increases over the period, there have been decreases in some of the smaller groups – notably in learning disabilities provision.

Figure 21: Wales, nursing workforce (FTE) community nursing services, health visitors and district nurses (2010-2017) - Index change: 2010=100



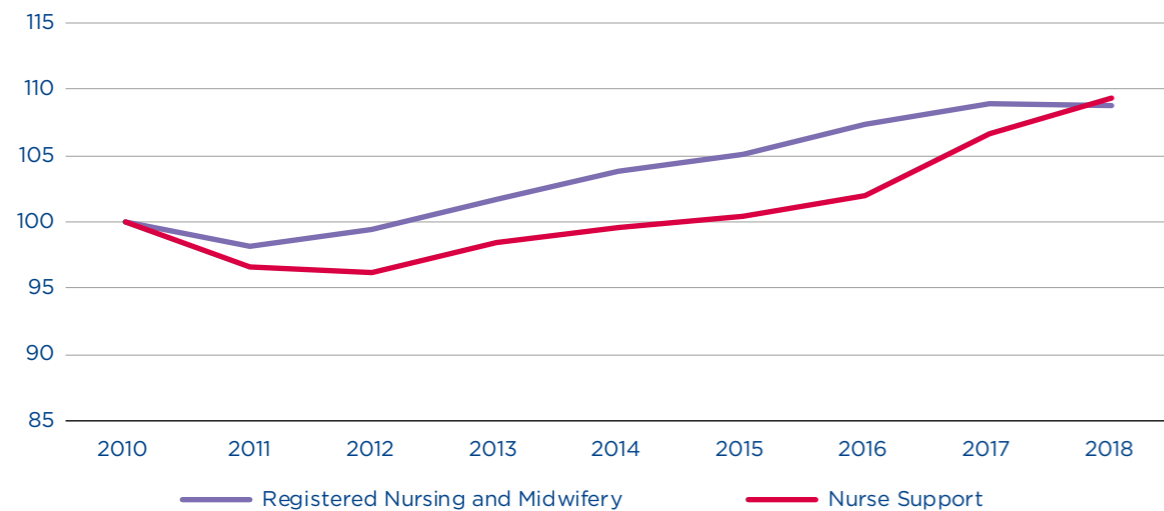
Source: StatsWales. Nursing staff by area of work and year 2010-2017

Figure 21 shows the overall trend in the community nursing services workforce between 2010 and 2017 and that the number of FTE nursing staff increased by 21% over this period.

Within the community nursing workforce, the number of health visitors has grown by 19% from 739 to 885 between 2010 and 2017. Meanwhile, the number of district nurses fell by 22% between 2010 and 2016 but then recovered - rising from 522 in 2015 to 825 in 2017.

3.4 Health and Social Care Service Northern Ireland

Figure 22: Northern Ireland, registered nursing and midwifery staff (FTE), nurse support staff (2010-2018) - Index change: 2010=100



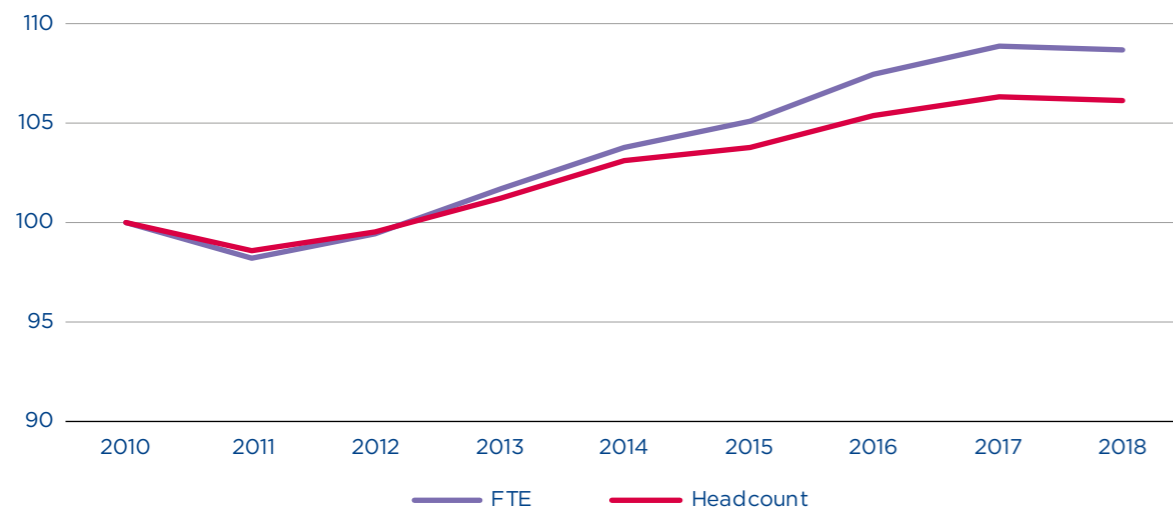
Source: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland HSC Workforce Census

The registered nursing and midwifery workforce (FTE) grew overall between 2010 and 2018 by 8.7%, from 13,899 to 15,112.

The nursing support staff workforce has grown by 9.4% from 3,999 in 2010 to 4,374 in 2018.

Figure 23 compares the growth in headcount compared to that of the full-time equivalent workforce among registered nurses and midwives between 2010 and 2018. The FTE measure grew slightly faster than headcount, with FTE growth of 8.7% and headcount growth of 6.1%.

Figure 23: Northern Ireland, registered nursing and midwifery staff (FTE and headcount) 2010-2018 - Index change: 2010=100



Source: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland HSC Workforce Census

Table 12: Northern Ireland, registered nursing and midwifery staff (FTE) by work area (2014-2018)

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2012-2016
Acute nurses	7,520	7,778	7,955	8,021	8,011	6.5
Mental health nurses	1,636	1,591	1,593	1,617	1,604	-2.0
Midwifery	1,095	1,079	1,090	1,079	1,090	-0.5
District nurses*	853	793	856	860	851	-0.2
Paediatric nurses	749	765	770	786	780	4.1
Health visitors**	461	491	480	497	496	7.6
Learning disability nurses	428	404	412	395	367	-14.3

Source: Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Northern Ireland HSC Workforce Census

*includes community staff nurses working within district nursing services

**includes student health visitors

Table 12 provides the FTE numbers of registered nursing and midwifery workforce by work area between 2014 and 2018. While there has been an increase of 6.5% in acute nursing which represents the largest workforce grouping, there have been falls in other groups including mental health nursing (-2%), midwifery (-0.5%), district nursing (-0.2%) and learning disability nursing (-14.3%) between 2014 and 2018.

4. General Practice Nursing Workforce

This section aims to bring together the best available data on the general practice nursing workforce. The general practice nursing team broadly includes health care assistants, general practice nurses, nurse specialists and advanced nurse practitioners. Comparability across the four countries is limited due to different approaches in data gathering methodology, however, this section provides an indication of the size of the workforce in this important sector.

Table 13: General Medical Practice Nurses (FTE) 2016-2018: England

	2016	2017	2018	% change 2017-2018
Practice nurses	10,594	11,545	11,575	0.3
Advanced nurse practitioners	2,304	2,832	3,137	10.8
Nurse specialists	445	486	501	3.1
Extended role practice nurses	402	611	610	-0.2
District nurses	15	14	15	7.1
Nursing partners	14	21	29	38.1
Nurse dispensers	-	19	22	15.8
Not stated	1,978	-	-	
Total	15,753	15,528	15,889	2.3

Source: NHS Digital

General Practitioners, who are almost all self-employed, contract their services back to the NHS and employ their own staff including nurses. There are approximately 7,270 GP practices in England.¹⁴ Figures for general medical practice nurses in England show that the largest groups in this workforce are practice nurses and advanced nurse practitioners. Just under three quarters (72.8%) are practice nurses and the second largest group are advanced nurse practitioners at 19.7%. Another 3% of nurses in general practice are specialist nurses, and 3.8% are extended role practice nurses. There are no available figures for the nursing or health care assistant workforce in GP practices in England.

Table 14: Estimated General Medical Practice Nurses (FTE) 2013-2017: Scotland

	2013	2015	2017	% change 2015-2017
Practice nurses	1,025	1,040	1,115	7.2
Nurse practitioners/ advanced nurse practitioners	395	415	426	2.7
Total	1,420	1,455	1,541	5.9

Source: Information Services Division, Scotland

Table 15: Estimated General Medical Practice Health Care Support Workers (FTE) 2013-2017: Scotland

	2013	2015	2017	% change 2015-2017
Health Care Support Workers	300	365	399	9.3

Source: Information Services Division, Scotland

There are approximately 944 GP practices in Scotland, employing around 1,541 registered nurses and an additional 399 health care support workers.

Table 16: General Medical Practice Nurses (headcount) 2017: Wales

Advanced Level Nurses	239
Extended Role Nurses	258
Practice Nurses	934
Total	1,436

The figures presented above are taken from the General Medical Services (GMS) census based on workforce data in 432 GP Practices in Wales.¹⁵

The total number of nurses will not necessarily equal the sum of Advanced, Extended and Practice Nurses as some practices only provide the total number of nurses and not the breakdown.

Northern Ireland

In the absence of official data, this section presents data from a survey of all practices in Northern Ireland undertaken in 2016, which received a 52% response rate. Based on the response rate, there were an estimated 540 full time equivalent staff in the nursing workforce in 2016.

Table 17: General Medical Practice Nurses 2016: Northern Ireland

	Headcount	FTE
Advanced Nurse Practitioner	16	9.9
Nurse Practitioner	34	21.9
Specialist nurse	9	8.8
Practice nurse	238	158.3
Treatment room nurse (non Trust employed)	68	37.8
Health care assistants	71	35.5
Phlebotomists	36	10.2
Others	7	3.8
Total	479	272.4

Source: Northern Ireland General Practice Nursing Workforce Survey Report 2016

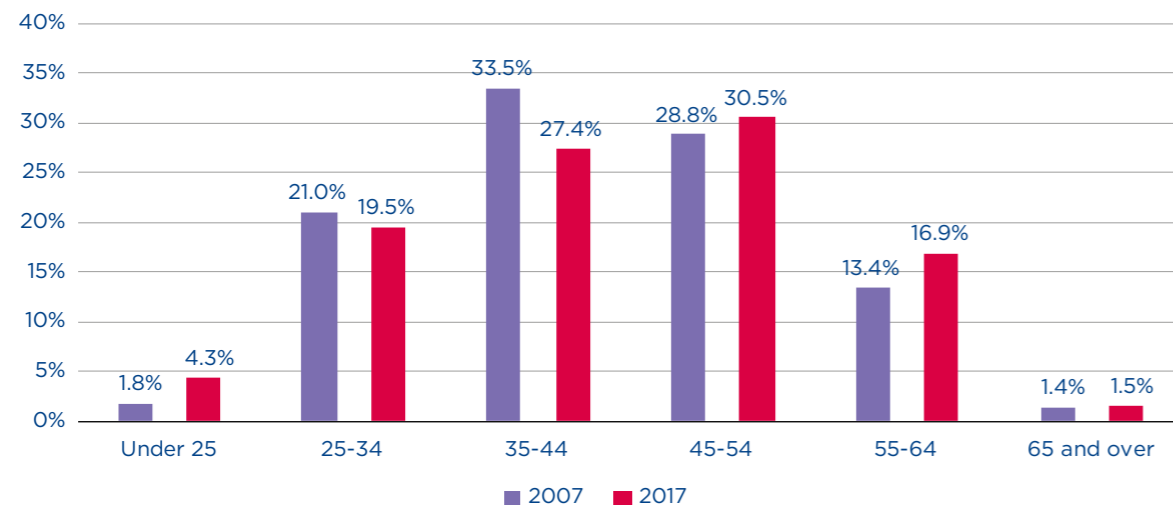
4.5 Nursing and age

The following figures provide estimates of the age profile of registered nursing staff using available data from the Labour Force Survey, NHS England, NHS Scotland and Health and Social Care Northern Ireland. Data are not available for NHS staff in Wales.

These figures confirm how the profile of the nursing workforce is progressively ageing. Comparisons of data from over the last decade highlight how older workers form a growing component of the workforce across the UK.

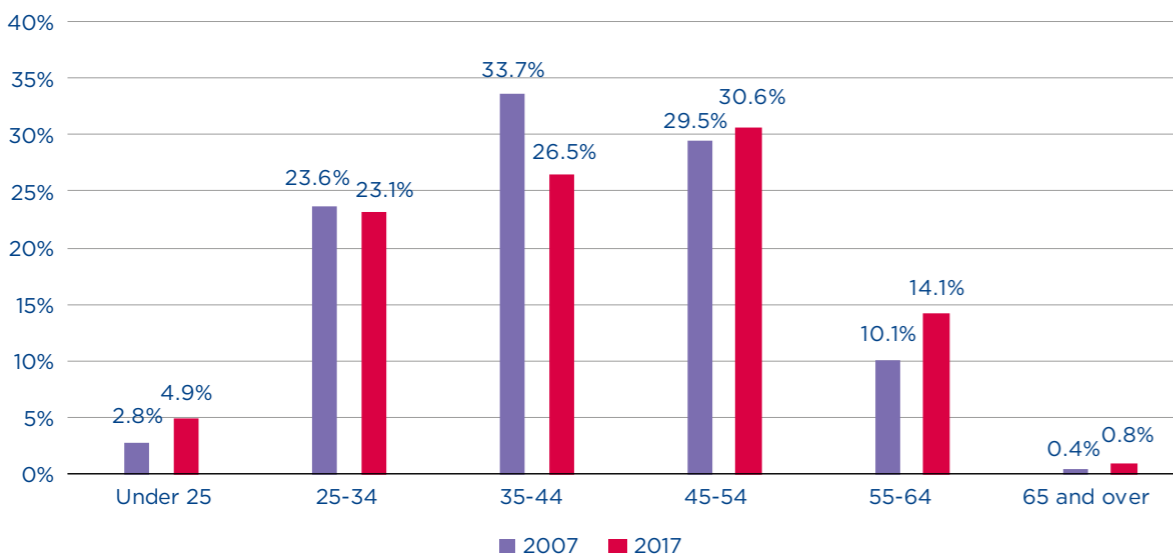
Analysis of the Labour Force Survey shows that 43.6% of the registered nurse workforce across all sectors was aged 45 or over in 2007, compared to 48.9% in 2017.

Figure 24: Age profile of nurses working in the UK, 2007 and 2017



Source: Labour Force Survey January to March 2007 and January to March 2017

Figure 25: NHS England: age profile, registered nursing staff, September 2007 and September 2017 (headcount)

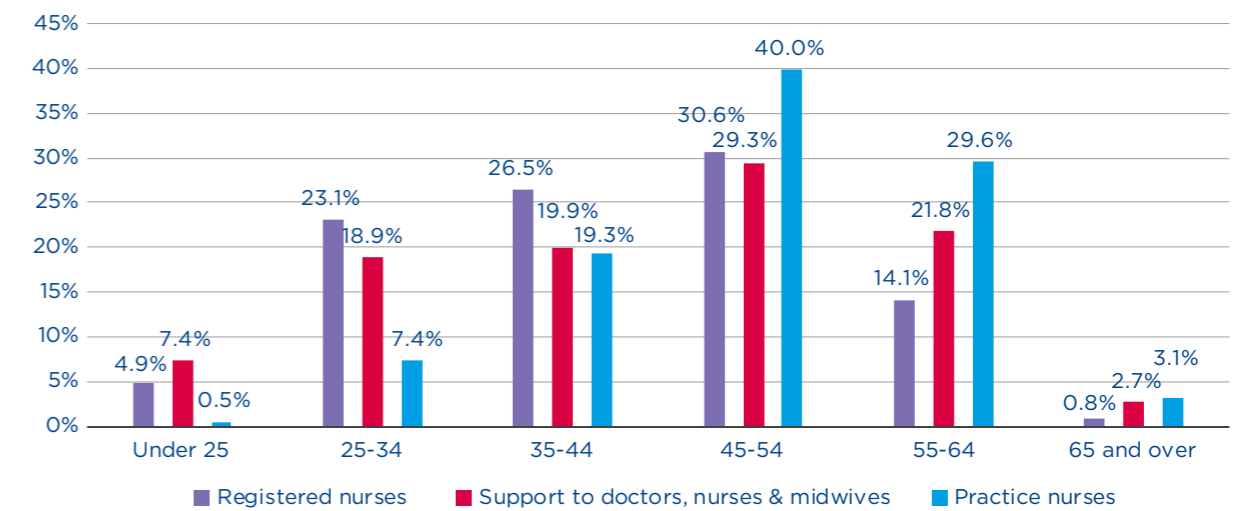


Source: NHS Digital

Figure 25 shows the changing age profile among the registered nursing workforce in England over the last decade, with four in ten (40%) of the workforce aged 45 or over in 2007, compared to 45.5% in 2017.

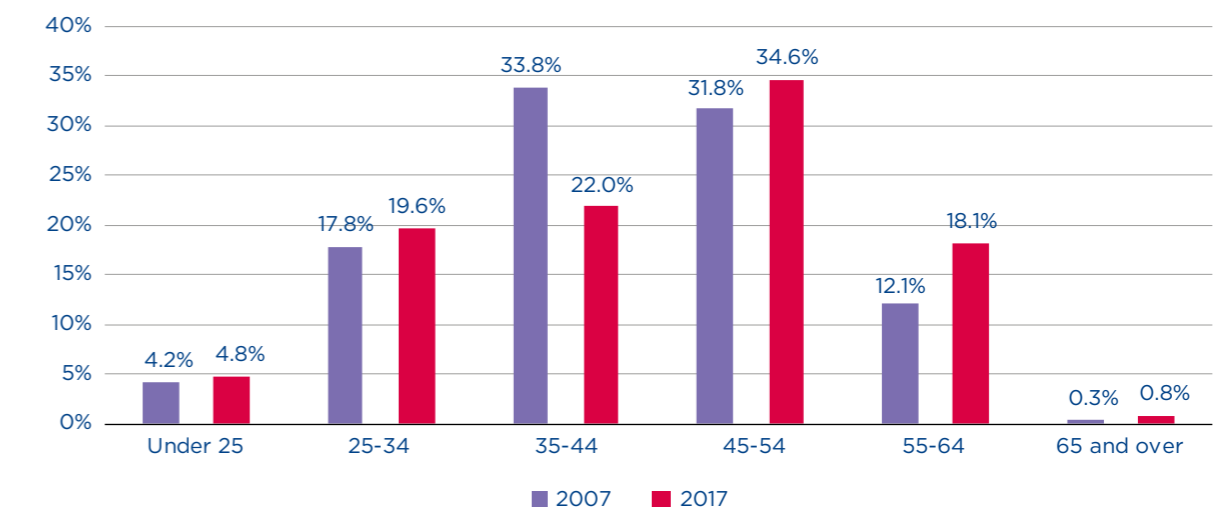
Figure 26 includes the age profile for nurse support staff and practice nurses, in comparison to registered nursing and midwifery and health visiting staff. Figures suggest that the practice nurse workforce has a much higher proportion of older staff than the other two groups; almost three quarters (72.7%) are aged over 45 compared to 53.8% of nursing support staff and 45.5% of registered nursing staff working in NHS hospital and community health services in England.

Figure 26: NHS England: age profile, registered nursing staff, support staff and practice nurses, September 2017 (headcount)



Source: NHS Digital

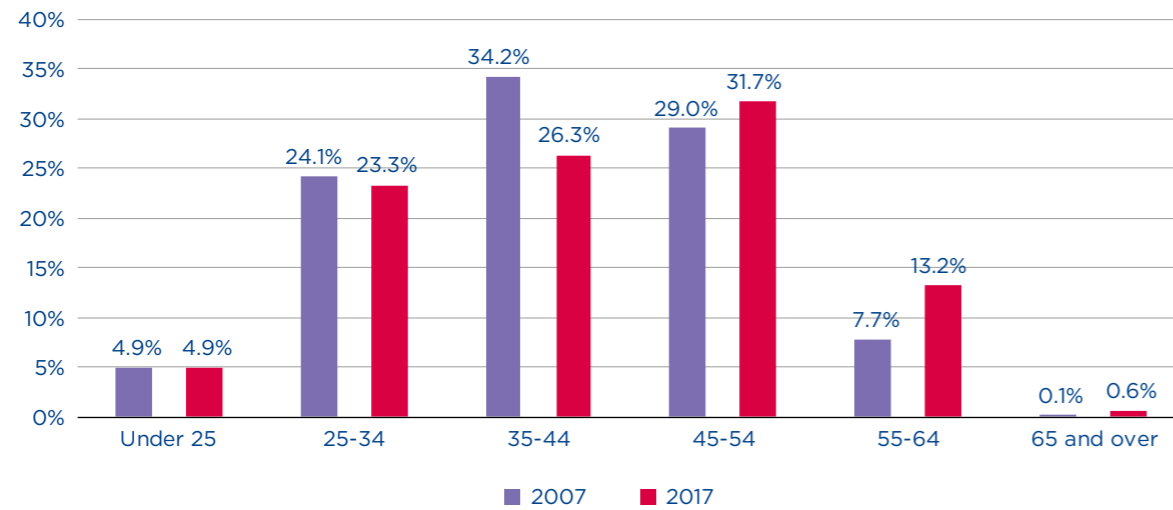
Figure 27: NHS Scotland: age profile, all nursing and midwifery staff, September 2007 and 2017 (headcount)



Source: Information Services Division, Scotland

Figure 27 shows a similar change in age profile in the nursing workforce in Scotland as that in England. Two fifths (44.2%) of the nursing and midwifery workforce was aged 45 or over in 2007, compared to over half (53.5%) in 2017.

Figure 28: Health & Social Care Services, Northern Ireland: age profile, registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff 2007 and 2017 (headcount)



Source: Department of Health, Northern Ireland HSC Workforce Census

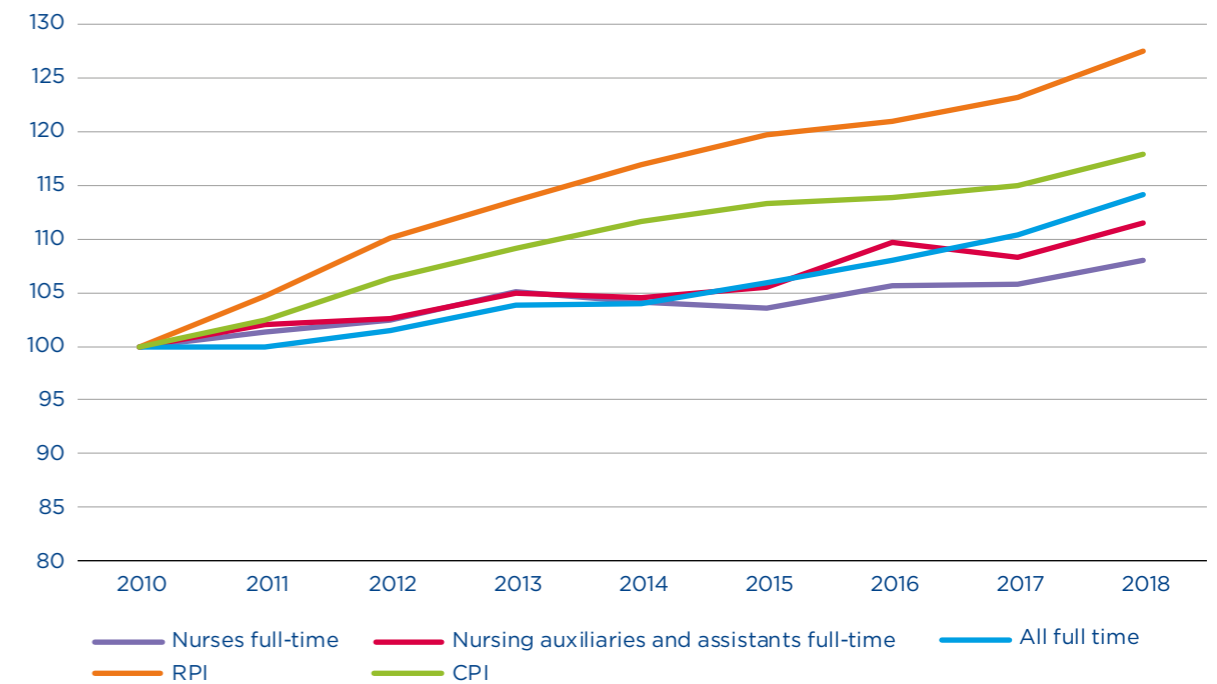
Figure 28 shows the contrasting age profile of the registered nursing workforce in Northern Ireland between 2007 and 2017. In 2007, just over a third (36.8%) of registered nursing staff were over the age of 45, compared with 45.5% in 2017.

5. Nursing and earnings

5.1 Nursing staff

Section 5 looks at average earnings growth for nursing staff compared to other employees in the UK, using Office for National Statistics data.

Figure 29: Median weekly earnings for full-time employees compared to CPI and RPI inflation 2010-2018 - Index: 2010=100

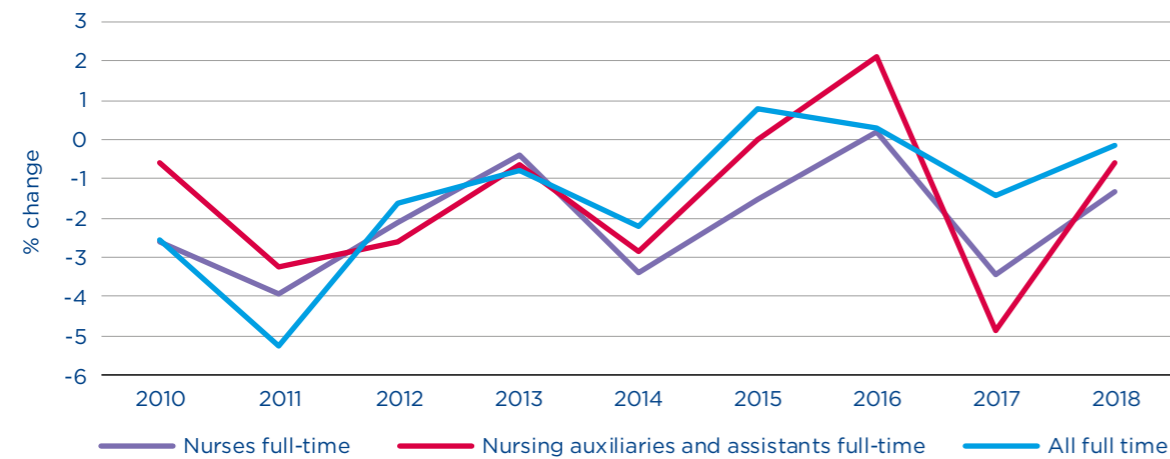


Source: Office for National Statistics. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and Consumer Price Inflation time series dataset

Figure 29 shows the growth in full-time weekly earnings for all UK nursing staff and all UK employers between 2010 and 2018, using 2010 figures as the base. Since 2010, nominal weekly earnings rose by 8.1% for nurses and 11.4% for nursing auxiliaries and assistants, compared to 14.1% for the whole population working full-time. Meanwhile, the Retail Prices Index (RPI) has risen by 28.3% and the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) by 19% over this period.

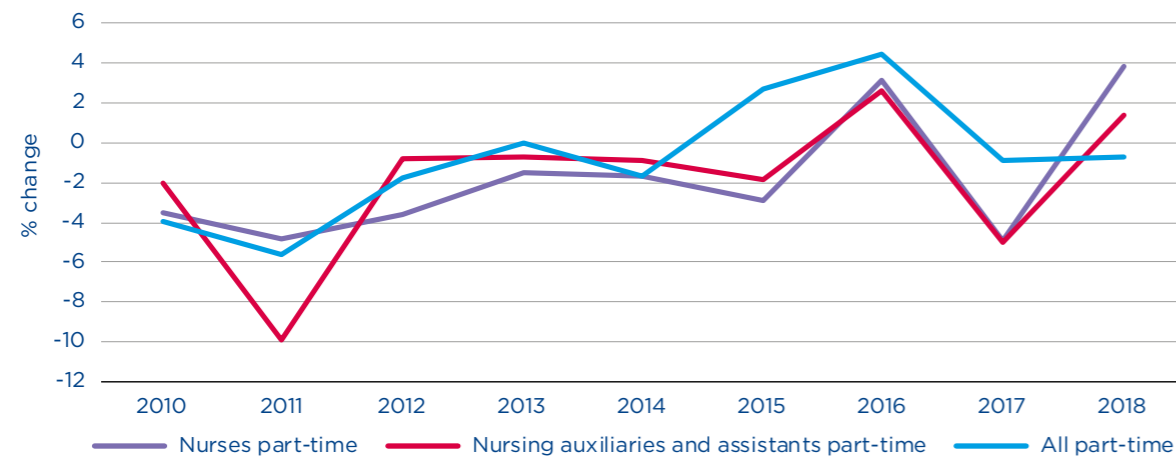
Median weekly full-time earnings for nurses stood at £642 in 2016 – a rise of 2% since 2017. Median weekly full-time earnings of nursing auxiliaries and assistants were £394, an increase of 3.5% from the previous 12 months.

Figure 30: Real terms annual change for median weekly earnings (full-time employees, UK) 2010-2018



Source: Office for National Statistics. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and Consumer Price Inflation time series datasets

Figure 31: Real terms annual change for median weekly earnings (part-time employees, UK) 2010-2018



Source: Office for National Statistics. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings and Consumer Price Inflation time series dataset

Figure 30 looks at year-on-year changes in median weekly earnings since 2010, adjusting for RPI inflation. It shows that between 2010 until 2018, there has been negative annual growth in real-terms median weekly earnings in every year except two for all full-time employees in the UK economy. During this period, real terms earnings have dropped cumulatively by 12.9%.

Among full-time nurses, there has been a cumulative real terms fall in weekly earnings of 18.5% and a 13.3% cumulative real terms drop for nursing auxiliaries and assistants.

Figure 31 shows real terms median weekly earnings growth for part-time workers between 2010 and 2018. Part-time nursing auxiliaries and assistants have experienced a cumulative real terms fall in earnings of 17.2%, while earnings have dropped by 16.1% for part-time nurses.

Median part-time earnings for nursing staff stood at £360 in 2018, and £211 for nursing auxiliaries and assistants.

5.2 NHS earnings

The data presented below show trends in median earnings for nursing staff in England between 2011 and 2018. Comparative data for the other UK countries are not available.

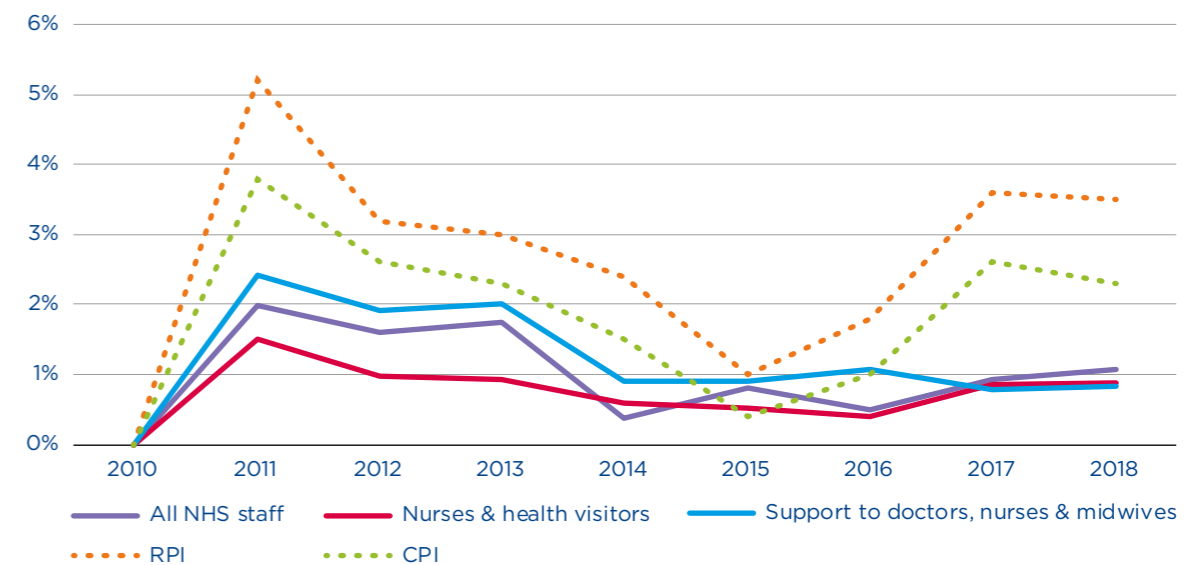
This data should be interpreted against the background of public sector pay constraint since 2012.

- 2012: pay freeze for those earning above £21,000 per year
- 2013: 1% consolidated uplift for all staff in UK
- 2014: 1% non-consolidated uplift only for staff at the top of their pay band in England and Northern Ireland; a one-off payment of £187 in Wales; 1% consolidated uplift for all staff in Scotland
- 2015: 1% consolidated uplift for those earning up to point 42 of the Agenda for Change pay scale (£56,504) in England; 1% consolidated uplift for all Agenda for Change staff in Wales and Scotland as well as the Living Wage
- 2016: 1% consolidated pay uplift for all staff
- 2017: 1% consolidated pay uplift for all staff
- 2018: 3 year agreement, with a minimum uplift of 6.5% across the period in England.

Figure 32 shows that while RPI rose by 20.4% and CPI by 13.3% between 2011 and 2017, nominal earnings (not taking into account inflation) changed for the following staff groups:

- all NHS Hospital and Community Health Service: 9.0%
- registered nursing and health visiting staff: 6.7%
- support to doctors and nursing staff (includes health care assistants and support workers): 10.9%

Figure 32: Nominal annual change in median annual earnings: NHS Hospital and Community Health Service; registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting midwifery staff; and support to doctors and nursing staff compared to RPI and CPI, England (2010-2018)

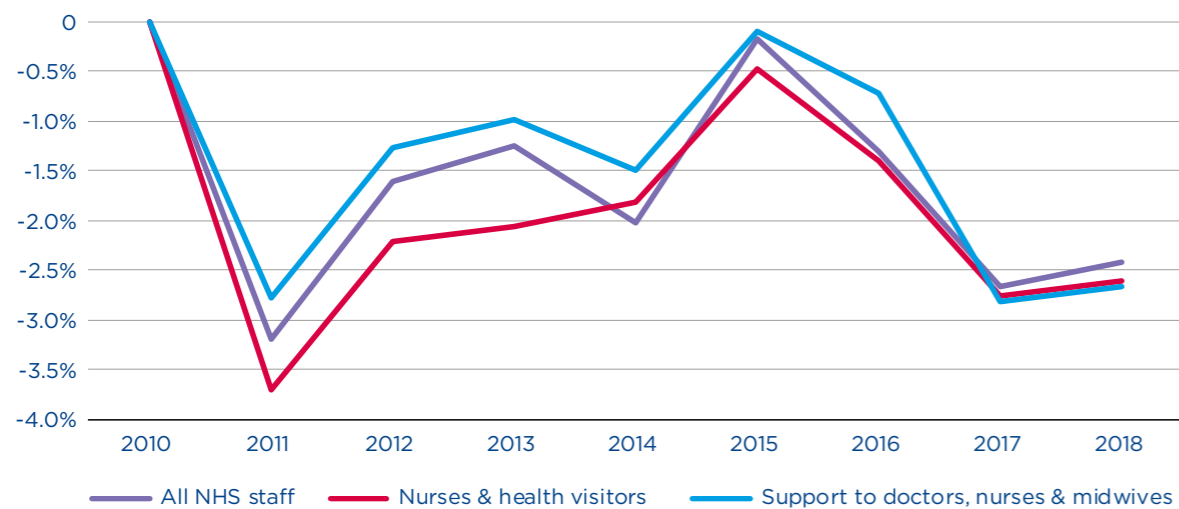


Source: NHS Digital

Figure 33 shows median annual earnings trend figures, with growth adjusted for RPI inflation:

- Registered nursing and health visiting staff have suffered a real terms, cumulative, drop of 17.0%
- Support to doctors and nursing staff saw a drop of 12.8%
- All NHS Hospital and Community Health Service staff experienced a real terms drop of 14.7% between 2010 and 2018

Figure 33: Real terms (RPI) annual change in median annual earnings: NHS Hospital and Community Health Service; registered nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff; and support to doctors and nursing staff, England (2010-2018)



Source: NHS Digital

6. Nurse education

This section looks at data and trends regarding the demand for and entry to pre-registration nursing courses in higher education institutions (HEI). This data provides an indication of the future supply of registered nurses into the UK workforce.

6.1 Higher education

Table 18 shows that the number of applicants to nursing courses between 2014 and 2018 has fallen by 9.1% over the last year and by 28% since 2014.

The continued fall in numbers has been attributed to both Brexit and the replacement in England of the student bursary with a loan for tuition and living costs.

Table 18: Nursing applicants for all courses

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2014-18	% change 2017-18
England	52,550	51,160	51,840	40,060	35,260	-32.9	-12.0
Scotland	5,860	5,820	5,600	5,470	5,600	-4.4	2.4
Wales	2,950	3,040	3,270	2,940	2,980	1.0	1.4
Northern Ireland	2,770	2,710	2,750	2,590	2,400	-13.4	-7.3
EU	1,810	1,650	1,690	1,290	1,180	-34.8	-8.5
Outside EU	550	580	480	670	750	36.4	11.9
Total	66,490	64,950	65,620	53,010	48,170	-27.6	-9.1

Source: Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Table 19 looks at the number of placed applicants to UK university nursing courses. There has been a 1.3% drop in the number of placed applicants to between 2017 and 2018, with a fall of 570 in England alone.

Table 19: Placed applicants to nursing courses as at 13 September 2018

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2014-18	% change 2017-18
England	20,660	20,670	22,040	20,820	20,250	-2.0	-2.7
Scotland	2,970	2,950	2,950	3,200	3,340	12.5	4.4
Wales	1,270	1,500	1,580	1,630	1,720	35.4	5.5
Northern Ireland	940	950	1,100	1,070	1,050	11.7	-1.9
EU	440	480	520	420	400	-9.1	-4.8
Outside EU	60	80	60	100	130	116.7	30.0
Total	26,340	26,630	28,250	27,240	26,890	2.1	-1.3

Source: Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

6.2 Placed applicants by age

The following set of tables look at the number of placed applicants according to age profile.

In England has seen an overall 3% drop over the last year. Moreover, the fall in the number of placed applicants aged 19 and over outpaced the rise in the numbers of 18 year old applicants by around a factor of three.

Table 20: England, placed applicants to nursing courses as at 13 September 2018 by age

Age	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2014-18	% change 2017-18
17	10	0	0	10	10	0.0	0.0
18	3,870	4,030	4,220	4,620	4,920	27.1	6.5
19	2,550	2,480	2,630	2,610	2,390	-6.3	-8.4
20-24	5,760	5,650	5,600	5,070	4,660	-19.1	-8.1
25 and over	8,480	8,510	9,590	8,510	8,280	-2.4	-2.7

Source: Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

The table below shows an almost mirror image in Scotland. While England has seen the number of applicants aged 19 and over fall by 5.3% between 2017 and 2018, Scotland has enjoyed an increase of 7.9%.

Table 21: Scotland, placed applicants to nursing courses as at 13 September 2018 by age

Age	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2014-18	% change 2017-18
17 and under	20	10	20	20	20	0.0	0.0
18	610	610	610	640	580	-4.9	-9.4
19	330	310	340	310	320	-3.0	3.2
20-24	850	830	760	810	830	-2.4	2.5
25 and over	1,150	1,190	1,220	1,420	1,590	38.3	12.0

Source: Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

The picture also looks somewhat more stable in Wales which saw a small, overall, increase of 1.4% between 2017 and 2018, with a drop only in the number of placed applicants aged 19 (which make up 11% of all the age groups.)

Table 22: Wales, placed applicants to nursing courses as at 13 September 2018 by age

Age	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2014-18	% change 2017-18
18	230	300	330	340	360	56.5	5.9
19	130	170	190	210	190	46.2	-9.5
20-24	350	420	440	440	440	25.7	0.0
25 and over	560	620	630	650	730	30.4	12.3

Source: Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Northern Ireland experienced an overall drop of 7.3% in placed applicants between 2017 and 2018; with a notable drop of 8.1% in the number of applicants aged 18.

Table 23: Northern Ireland, placed applicants to nursing courses as at 13 September 2018 by age

Age	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	% change 2014-18	% change 2017-18
18	270	300	320	370	340	25.9	-8.1
19	160	150	190	170	180	12.5	5.9
20-24	280	280	310	300	280	0.0	-6.7
25 and over	240	220	280	240	250	4.2	4.2

Source: Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

References and notes

- 1 www.nmc.org.uk/about-us/reports-and-accounts/registration-statistics
- 2 SOC 2231 defines nurses as those providing 'general and/or specialised nursing care for the sick, injured and others in need of such care, assist medical doctors with their tasks and work with other health care professionals and within teams of health care workers. They advise on and teach nursing practice.'
- 3 SOC 6141 defines nursing auxiliaries and assistants as those who 'assist doctors, nurses and other health professionals in caring for the sick and injured within hospitals, homes, clinics and the wider community.'
- 4 SOC 2232 defines midwives as those who 'deliver, or assist in the delivery of babies, provide antenatal and postnatal care and advise parents on baby care. They work with other health care professionals, and advise on and teach midwifery practice.'
- 5 While midwives are not shown in these figures, almost all are employed in health authorities or NHS trusts/boards
- 6 Full-time and part-time status is self-classified by respondents to the Labour Force Survey.
- 7 Data for all four countries is provided as whole time equivalent (WTE) figures and measured at September annually.
- 8 <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/nhs-workforce-statistics>
- 9 www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Workforce/
- 10 <https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Health-and-Social-Care/NHS-Staff>
- 11 www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/dhssps-statistics-and-research/workforce-statistics
- 12 Workforce data has been under review in Scotland due to issues with data quality and in 2014/15 an NHS Scotland wide project to improve the accuracy of recording and reporting on the community nursing workforce was carried out. Longer term trend data is not available as data prior to the completion of the review (for December 2014 and earlier) is not comparable.
- 13 Includes district nurses, health visitors and community nurses
- 14 <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/general-and-personal-medical-services/final-31-march-and-provisional-30-june-2018-experimental-statistics>
- 15 <https://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2018/180426-general-medical-practitioners-2006-2017-en.pdf>

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