

Information for international nurses during COVID-19

Welcome to all our international nurses.

You are key to the NHS workforce and we're honoured to have you as part of the NHS family.

We recognise that coming into a new country is daunting and it can be difficult at times to know where to go for information. Below is a list of some of the national health and wellbeing support available to you, together with information on travel, getting your COVID-19 vaccination and wearing personal protective equipment (PPE).

Please be reassured that although we are in the middle of a pandemic, your health, wellbeing and safety at work is a priority. Alongside national guidance, your trust will have implemented a range of training, support and safeguarding to protect your health and wellbeing.

This is a very challenging time, and we recognise and thank you for your commitment, and value your contribution to keeping our patients safe.

“To all my international colleagues who come from right across the globe, I want to say thank you for joining us and for all that you do.”

Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England.



Travelling from a red-list country

From Friday 23 April, nurses taking up new employment in NHS Trusts may be able to use a hospital-managed quarantine service when traveling from or through red-list (travel banned) countries rather than the government's Managed Quarantine System. This will depend on whether your employing trust is able to meet certain Government criteria.

On arrival you will be provided a welcome pack with practical information and wellbeing advice from your Trust.

- [Quarantine arrangements for exempt nurses from overseas.](#)

Visa extensions

Temporary measures have been put into place by the Home Office to extend the visas of all regulated healthcare professionals (nurses included) across the NHS for one year where their visa is due to expire between 1 April 2021 and 30 September 2021.

If you have lived in the UK for a continuous period of five years, you will be eligible to apply for EU settled status. The deadline to apply for EU settled status is 30 June 2021.

- [Visa extensions for health workers during COVID-19.](#)
- [EU settled status.](#)

Travelling to the UK

From Monday 18 January 2021 you must have proof of a negative COVID-19 test to travel to England. You must take the test three days before you start your journey.

- [Preparing to travel to the UK during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

You will need to take a COVID-19 test on or before day 2 of your quarantine period. Tests will be taken in your own accommodation.

You need to take a COVID-19 test on or after day 8, unless you got a positive result from your day-2 test.

If you get a positive result from your day-2 or day-8 test, you must quarantine for ten days.

- [How to quarantine when you arrive in England.](#)

COVID-19 vaccination

Frontline health and care staff, including nurses, are a priority group to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in the UK. This includes bank, locum and agency staff. You will receive your vaccination from your trust, even if you aren't yet registered with a GP and don't have an NHS number. Speak to your human resources (HR) team if you have any questions or concerns.

Regular COVID-19 testing is available for patient-facing NHS staff who don't have symptoms.

- [Vaccinating frontline health and social care workers.](#)

Health and wellbeing resources

There are lots of free resources available to you to help you feel supported.

The comprehensive health and wellbeing offer for all NHS staff can be accessed via england.nhs.uk/people. This includes:

- [Support now](#) – Access to a helpline operated by the Samaritans and a confidential bereavement support line operated by Hospice UK
- [Wellbeing apps](#) – NHS staff have been given free access to a number of wellbeing apps to support with their mental health and wellbeing
- [Staff mental health and wellbeing hubs](#) - hubs have been set up to provide healthcare colleagues rapid access to local evidence-based mental health services and support where needed. The hub offer is confidential and free of charge for all healthcare staff.
- [Looking After You Too](#) - Individual coaching support for ethnic minority staff working in NHS and ambulance trusts
- [Wellbeing conversations – Our NHS People](#) - could help individual staff members to discuss their health and wellbeing their line manager and develop a personalised support plan

For advice about health and wellbeing services available at your trust or in your local area, speak to your line manager, occupational health or human resources (HR) department. You should receive this information as part of your local induction.

Please refer to your trust's health and wellbeing guidance.

- [Supporting our NHS people.](#)

Staff support networks

There may be networks in your trust or your local community which provide support around disability, religion (including chaplaincy services), ethnicity (including ethnic minority staff networks). You should receive this information as part of your induction, or ask your line manager to connect you with these groups. You may also want to connect with other nurses and nursing groups outside your trust. Twitter and Facebook groups can be a good place to network and share learning.

- [@teamCNO on Twitter supports and informs nursing, midwifery and care staff.](#)
- [@WeNurse on Twitter connects nurses to share information, ideas, knowledge and support.](#)

You can find a list of international nursing associations at the end of this guide.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) guidance

PPE is available across all healthcare settings. You will be given appropriate PPE, as well as training and support in using it, when working in clinical settings, as well as face masks for non-clinical settings.

- [Infection control guidance.](#)

Please also refer to your trust's guidance on PPE.

Risk assessments

Some people are more vulnerable to serious illness and death from COVID-19. These include older people, people with a disability, pregnant women and people from some ethnic minority backgrounds. Employers have a legal duty of care to protect their staff from harm, injury and illness, and to carry out assessments to measure the level of risk to their workforce. You will be asked to take part in a workforce risk assessment process.

You'll have opportunities to talk to your line manager or occupational health team about any concerns or anxiety you may have, and they will work with you to ensure you are supported to work safely. Please refer to your trust's guidance on COVID-19 risk assessments.

Redeployment

It's important that nurses, midwives and healthcare professionals work together and flexibly to provide care and skills where they are most needed. If you are asked to volunteer to redeploy to another ward, department or role, talk to your line manager or team leader about any concerns you may have, and to find out what training, if required, will be provided.

- [Royal College of Nursing \(RCN\) redeployment information.](#)
- [Nursing and Midwifery Council \(NMC\) code of duty and responsibility to patients and care.](#)

Objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)

During your induction at your new trust, you will be provided with information about training for, and taking, your OSCE. You'll be supported throughout the process by a member of the OSCE team at your trust.

- [Royal College of Nursing OSCE support information.](#)

Training and development

There are many training and development opportunities for nurses within the NHS. Once you have completed your OSCE you can access training via your trust's learning and development department.

- [Training and development opportunities in different nursing roles.](#)

Joining the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) temporary register

The Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) register shows who can practise as a nurse or midwife in the UK, or as a nursing associate in England. The NMC has opened a temporary emergency register in response to the COVID-19 pandemic for nurses placed in England. International nurses who have not yet achieved full registration with the NMC are being asked to join.

Joining the temporary register is voluntary. To be eligible, you must work for a registered health or care provider in England, and work alongside a nurse who is on the full NMC register. If you are eligible to join, you'll be sent an invitation. If you don't receive this, please speak to your line manager.

If you join the NMC temporary register, you can work as a temporary registrant and be paid the NHS Agenda for Change band 5 pay rate and perform further nursing care.

You are encouraged to continue working towards passing your objective structured clinical examination (OSCE) and applying to join the full NMC register. You don't have to pay a registration fee and can opt out of the temporary register at any time.

The NMC will be automatically extending the validity of computer-based testing (CBT) results due to expire between 1 March and 31 August 2021 by six months.

For evidence of English language competency, the NMC will accept the OET@Home test as well as both the paper and computer based IELTS Academic test delivered at a test centre. However the NMC will not accept the IELTS indicator test. Test scores are valid for two years.

- [Information for overseas candidates](#)
- [Joining the NMC COVID-19 temporary register.](#)
- [NHS Agenda for Change pay bands.](#)
- [OSCE examinations during COVID-19.](#)

Raising concerns

Usually your line manager will be your first point of call, but if you don't feel you can speak up to them or use other formal routes, then you should refer to your local Freedom To Speak Up Guardian, who will be able to offer guidance and support. You can also speak to a union representative (see support from trade unions section).

Support from trade unions

Trade unions for healthcare workers can support you in lots of ways, including providing access to legal services, immigration advice and other professional services. Contact your local union representatives to find more about the benefits of joining a union.

- [Royal College of Nursing \(RCN\).](#)
- [Unite.](#)
- [UNISON.](#)

International nursing associations

The NHS is committed to inclusion, and values the diversity of all cultures. It is important that you can connect to people who understand your culture, mindset and your journey and lived experience. We work with the following international nursing associations:

Association	Contact details
All Pakistani Nurses Association (APNA)	wakcare@gmail.com
Association Isabel Zenda: Association of Spanish Nurses and Health Workers working in the UK C.I.C	@IsabelZenda
Association of Guyanese Nurses and Allied Professionals (AGNAP)	agnapuk.wordpress.com AGNAP@aol.com @AGNAP2
Association of South African Nurses in the UK (ASANUK)	asanuk.com info@asanuk.com
Barbados Overseas Nurses Association (BONA)	barbadosoverseasnursesassociation.co.uk ceivongoodie@gmail.com
British Indian Nurses Association (BINA)	admin@binauk.org @BINA_UK
Cameroon Nurses Association UK (CAN UK)	camnursesuk.org info@camnursesuk.org
Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation (CNMF)	commonwealthnurses.org cnf@commonwealthnurses.org @CNMF4U
Filipino Nurses Association United Kingdom (FNA)	fnauk.org.uk president@fnauk.org.uk @filipinonurseuk
Gambia Healthcare Matters UK (GHM UK)	gambiahealthcarematters.org info@gambiahealthcarematters.org @GambiaUk
Ghana Nurses Association UK (GNA UK)	gna-uk.org info@gna-uk.org
Malawian-UK Nurses Association for Advancement (MUNAA)	munaa.co.uk info@munaa.co.uk @MalawianUKNurse
Nigerian Nurses Charitable Association UK (NNCAUK)	nncauk.org info@nncauk.org @NNCAUK
Nurses Association of Jamaica UK (NAJ UK)	naj.org.uk info@naj.org.uk @NAJUKNursing
Philippine Nurses Association of United Kingdom (PNAUK)	mypnauk.org admin@pnauk.org.uk @PNA_UKnurses
The Organisation of Sierra Leonean Healthcare Professionals Abroad (TOSHPA)	toshpa.org.uk info@toshpa.org.uk @TOSHPA_OFFICIAL
Uganda Nurses Midwives Association (UNMA-UK)	uganmas.uk@gmail.com @UgDiasporaNMAUK
Zimbabwe Health Training Support (ZHTS)	zhts.org.uk info@zhts.org.uk