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Chief Nursing Officer for England
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Dear colleague

5 April 2020

Nursing and midwifery response to COVID-19

I have been working with the NMC and nursing and midwifery leaders across the health and care system to identify how we can expand our existing workforce to support our response to COVID-19. The four areas we have identified are:

1. **People who have left the register within the last three years:** the government has passed legislation to enable the NMC to establish a COVID-19 temporary register, and the NMC has invited people who have left the register within the last three years to opt in.
2. **Skilled people who are currently on the register but not working in clinical care:** we are encouraging them to come into clinical practice during this time.
3. **Undergraduate nursing and midwifery students:** we are changing the nature of their programmes.
4. **A student part to the emergency COVID-19 temporary register:** this will be voluntary and include specific conditions of practice to ensure appropriate safeguards for students in the final six months of their programme who wish to step up.



I am personally asking you to consider, as per my second step above, coming back into clinical practice during this time and encouraging your colleagues to do so. I fully recognise and understand the considerable pressures on the higher education sector and that not all colleagues may be able to come back into direct clinical practice. But we also urgently need colleagues to work in indirect care, for example, providing leadership and pastoral care to students on placement and frontline staff, staffing telephone helplines, and supporting the operational teams.

Everyone's skills, background and experience are vitally important to us in this extraordinary time, and I am particularly aware of the immense knowledge and experience that health academics and clinical academics bring to the system.

These are unique times that call for exceptional measures. I have considered all scenarios to help protect the health of the nation, while simultaneously caring for all our staff and students.

Thank you for your personal leadership in these extraordinary and challenging times of COVID-19.

Your sincerely

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Ruth May". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ruth May

Chief Nursing Officer

NHS England and NHS Improvement

Annex 1 – how to re-join the workforce

1. If you are currently actively registered with the NMC:

- NHS professionals: <https://www.nhsprofessionals.nhs.uk/rapid-response>
- FAQs: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/coronavirus/returning-clinicians/nmcfaqs covid19/>
- Contact us: nhsi.nursing.returners@nhs.net or nhsi.midwives.returners@nhs.net

2. If your registration has lapsed re-joining consist of two steps:

- Step 1: NMC temporary registration:
www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/temporary-registration/
- Step 2: Complete our returners' survey:
https://nhsdigital.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8q4cFuRzm1j4maN