

We are clearly as a profession working in times that require extraordinary measures. We have engaged with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and work has progressed by them to examine options to support the COVID-19 response.

It should also be noted that discussions have been and continue to take place between all 4 country Chief Nursing Officers (CNOs) and their teams to ensure that the needs of all patients, individuals, staff and students remain central to decision-making in the delivery of care; and that a duty of care is applied to the employment of staff with assurance that no one is disadvantaged or discriminated against.

Therefore, I write to you today to let you know that my team and I have been closely working with the NMC and nursing and midwifery leaders across the health and care system, and have identified four groups that could expand our existing nursing workforce. These are set out below:

1. Once the government has passed the legislation to enable the NMC to establish a Covid-19 temporary register our first focus, we will be inviting those people who have left the register within the last three years to opt in should they wish to do so.
2. Encouraging those skilled people who are currently on the register, but not working in clinical care to come into clinical practice during this time.
3. Changing the nature of the programme for undergraduate nursing and midwifery students of the last six months of their programme so that they may be delivered in clinical placement.
4. The next stage of the Covid-19 temporary register would be to establish a specific student part to the emergency register which would be voluntary and include specific conditions of practice to ensure appropriate safeguards are in place.