

# EU nurses registering in UK falls by 90% post-Brexit

January 27 2017

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The number of European nurses registering to work in Britain has fallen by more than 90 percent since last June's Brexit vote, the British Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) told AFP on Friday.

A total of 101 nurses and midwives from EU nations registered in December, compared with 1,304 in July, the month after the referendum, according to the NMC.

The country's National Health Service (NHS) is currently in the spotlight over an apparent "winter crisis" and already has a staff shortage with 24,000 nursing vacancies across Britain.

Official figures comparing the monthly averages for previous years show 204 nurses registering in 2016, down from 820 in 2015 and 707 in 2014.

"This is the first sign of a change following the EU referendum and it is our responsibility as the regulator to share these figures with the public," said Janet Davies, chief executive of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN).

However, she stressed that it was not possible to link the fall in registrations with Brexit "definitively".

There are almost 700,000 nurses currently registered in the UK, of which 84.8 percent are British, 5.6 percent from the EU and 9.6 percent from the rest of the world.

Other reasons that could explain the decline include the toughening of the English language test in 2016, or the sharp decline of the pound, which has cut wages in euro terms.

Davies warned that the NHS could suffer a further crisis if the trend continued.

"With 24,000 nursing vacancies across the UK, the NHS simply could not cope without the contribution from EU [nurses](#)," she told AFP in a statement.

"We need a guarantee that EU nationals working in the NHS can remain. Without that, it will be much harder to retain and recruit staff from the EU, and patient care will suffer as a result."

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Citation: EU nurses registering in UK falls by 90% post-Brexit (2017, January 27) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-01-eu-nurses-registering-uk-falls.html>

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