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STATISTICS BOOK

Health Professionals & Hospitals: statistics and facts

9 full reports · Edition October 2026

25,770

MEDICINE
APPLICANTS

20%

HIGH BURNOUT RISK

13,465

CONCERNS 2025

82,415

GP REGISTER 2025

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Health Professionals & Hospitals: statistics and facts

Every Business Stats report on Health Professionals & Hospitals in one place: 9 reports, from United Kingdom (6 reports) and Doctors (2 reports).

The reports put numbers on it, for example 25,770 (Medicine applicants), 20% (High burnout risk), 13,465 (Concerns 2025) and 82,415 (GP register 2025).

Freshly updated: Medical and specialty training in the United Kingdom statistics & facts and Burnout and job satisfaction among UK doctors statistics & facts. Every report names its primary source, and its charts and tables can be downloaded and reused for free. The list grows on its own when a new report is published; it last changed on Oct 18, 2026.

Each chapter is a complete Business Stats report with its text, charts, tables and primary sources. The online version of every report is updated continuously; this book shows them as of Oct 19, 2026.

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STATISTICS REPORT

Medical and specialty training in the United Kingdom statistics & facts

A pipeline under pressure. Record numbers want to study medicine, nearly every graduate gets a foundation post, but competition for specialty training has tripled since 2019. In 2026 a new law gave UK graduates priority. This report follows the numbers through every stage of training.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/uk-specialty-training-statistics

25,770 MEDICINE APPLICANTS	8,045 ENTRANTS ENGLAND 2024	11,752 FOUNDATION APPLICATIONS
~40,000 SPECIALTY APPLICANTS	21.83 PSYCHIATRY RATIO	98% PRIORITY FILL 2026

OVERVIEW

Medical training in the UK at a glance

Becoming a doctor in the UK takes at least ten years, from medical school through the two-year foundation programme to specialty training. Every stage of that pipeline is now under pressure. Medicine attracted 25,770 UK university applicants for 2026 entry, up 10.4 percent. The UK Foundation Programme received 11,752 applications for 2026 and placed 98 percent of eligible applicants. But the real bottleneck comes next: in 2025 there were about 80,000 applications for specialty training in the first round, and NHS England reported that applicant numbers had risen from 12,000 in 2019 to nearly 40,000. In 2026 a new law gave UK graduates priority for training posts, transforming who gets them. This report sets out the numbers at every stage. For the workforce as a whole, see our overview of [doctors in the United Kingdom](#).

The UK medical training pathway has four main stages. Students spend five or six years at medical school. Graduates then complete the two-year UK Foundation Programme as foundation year 1 (FY1) and year 2 (FY2) doctors. After that, doctors apply for specialty training, either entering core training followed by higher training, or a run-through programme. Training to become a GP takes at least three years after foundation, and training to become a consultant typically takes between five and eight years. Doctors who



qualified abroad can join at the specialty training stage if they have a licence to practise.

25,770

Medicine applicants 2026

UCAS, 15 October deadline, up 10.4%.

11,752

Foundation applications 2026

98% of eligible applicants placed.

~40,000

Specialty training applicants

2026, for about 10,000 posts.

98%

Posts filled by priority groups

2026, up from 72% in 2025.

MEDICAL SCHOOL

Medical school places and applicants

The number of funded medical school places in England was increased to 7,500 a year in 2020 with the opening of five new medical schools. The government added 205 places for 2024/25 and 350 for 2025/26, and the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan set a goal of 15,000 places by 2031. In practice, first-year medicine entrants in England numbered 8,405 in 2020 and 8,485 in 2021, before falling to 7,625 in 2022 and rising to 7,820 in 2023 and a provisional 8,045 in 2024. Entrant numbers can exceed funded places because of international students and other places funded outside the cap.

First-year medicine entrants in England, 2020 to 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-specialty-training-statistics

Around 8,000 a year: Medical school intake in England has hovered around 8,000 since 2020.

Demand for medicine remains very high. According to UCAS, 24,150 people applied to study medicine by the October deadline for 2024 entry and 23,350 for 2025 entry, a fall of 3.3 percent. Applications then rebounded to a record 25,770 for 2026 entry, up 10.4 percent. Medicine remains one of the most competitive degree subjects. Medical students are not registered with the General Medical Council until they graduate, but universities run their own student fitness to practise procedures for concerns about conduct or health, explained in this guide to [student fitness to practise](#) . Once registered, doctors fall under the GMC process described in our report on [GMC fitness to practise statistics](#).

Applicants to study medicine at UK universities, 2024 to 2026 entry

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-specialty-training-statistics

Record demand: 25,770 people applied for medicine for 2026 entry.

FOUNDATION

The UK Foundation Programme

Every UK medical graduate who wants to practise must complete the foundation programme. For 2025 the UK Foundation Programme Office received 11,205 applications, of which 10,634 were eligible, and all eligible applicants were allocated a place. For 2026 applications rose to 11,752. Under the new prioritisation rules, 10,810 applicants in the priority groups, mainly UK graduates, were allocated in the main round, 82.3 percent to their first-choice area, while 738 applicants outside the priority groups were placed on a reserve list. After five reserve rounds, 11,286 eligible applicants, 98 percent, had been allocated a programme and 188 had not.

UK Foundation Programme applications and allocations, 2025 and 2026

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-specialty-training-statistics

Almost everyone placed: 98 percent of eligible applicants received a foundation post for 2026.

The foundation programme has grown with medical school output. In England, the number of foundation trainees across both years rose from 12,243 in 2020 to 14,104 in 2024. Over the same period, the number of first-level specialty training posts in England fell slightly, from 8,081 to 7,929. This mismatch between foundation output and specialty posts is at the heart of the training bottleneck.

Foundation trainees and first-level specialty posts in England, 2020 and 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-specialty-training-statistics

The bottleneck: Foundation trainees grew by 15 percent, while first-level specialty posts fell by 2 percent.



SPECIALTY TRAINING

Competition for specialty training

Competition for specialty training has intensified dramatically. NHS England data show that the number of applicants rose from about 12,000 in 2019 to nearly 40,000 by 2025, driven by growing numbers of UK graduates, international medical graduates and doctors who had been working in non-training posts. In the first round of 2025 there were about 80,000 applications, of which 28,000 were judged appointable, and more than 2,000 appointable UK graduates received no offer.

Competition ratios vary enormously between specialties. In the first round of 2025, core psychiatry training attracted 21.83 applications per post and ophthalmology 21.54. Anaesthetics core training had 12.56 applications per post, emergency medicine 14.23 and obstetrics and gynaecology 16.65. The largest programmes were less competitive: GP training had 4.91 applications per post and internal medicine training 5.27. Some small programmes were extremely competitive, with cardiothoracic surgery at 73.7 applications per post and community sexual and reproductive health at 98.5.

Competition ratios for specialty training in England, 2025 round 1

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-specialty-training-statistics

From 5 to 74 applications per post: Cardiothoracic surgery and public health were the most contested programmes.

Ratios rose almost everywhere between 2024 and 2025. Core psychiatry went from 9.45 applications per post to 21.83, anaesthetics from 6.50 to 12.56 and core surgical training from 5.25 to 8.57. GP training rose from 3.67 to 4.91 and internal medicine from 3.69 to 5.27. Because one applicant can apply to several programmes, applications per post overstate the number of competitors per post, but the trend is clear.

Applications per post for main training programmes, 2024 and 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-specialty-training-statistics

Psychiatry more than doubled: Core psychiatry competition rose from 9.5 to 21.8 applications per post.

PROGRAMME (ROUND 1)	APPLICATIONS 2025	POSTS 2025	RATIO 2025	RATIO 2024
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General practice ST1	20,995	4,276	4.91	3.67
Internal medicine training CT1	8,841	1,678	5.27	3.69
Core surgical training CT1	5,399	630	8.57	5.25
Core psychiatry CT1	10,677	489	21.83	9.45
Anaesthetics CT1	6,770	539	12.56	6.50
Paediatrics ST1	2,680	476	5.63	3.30

PRIORITISATION

The 2026 Medical Training Prioritisation Act

In response to the bottleneck, Parliament passed the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act, which gives UK medical graduates and certain other groups, including doctors with significant NHS experience, priority for foundation and specialty training posts. The effect in 2026 was immediate. According to NHS England, there were 37,689 appointable applications for 9,520 specialty training posts, about four per post, but only 19,706 from prioritised candidates, about two per post. Prioritised candidates filled 98 percent of posts, compared with 72 percent in 2025, and the share of accepted offers going to non-prioritised applicants fell from 27.95 percent to 1.75 percent. Accepted offers to non-prioritised applicants dropped from 2,168 to 163.

Impact of training prioritisation on specialty recruitment, 2025 and 2026 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-specialty-training-statistics

A dramatic shift: Non-prioritised applicants received 1.75 percent of accepted offers in 2026, down from 27.95 percent.

The change mainly affects international medical graduates who have not yet worked in the NHS. In 2024, 22,027 of the 79,171 doctors in training in the UK had qualified abroad, according to the GMC. Supporters of prioritisation argue that it ensures the UK benefits from the doctors it trains; critics warn that it could deter international doctors on whom many services depend. Our report on [international doctors in the UK](#) looks at this dependence, and our report on [doctors leaving the UK](#) at why some UK graduates still choose to go abroad.

**TRAINEES**

Doctors in training

In 2024 there were 79,171 licensed doctors in training in the UK, of whom 57,144 had qualified in the UK and 22,027 abroad. Women made up 58 percent of doctors in training, part of a wider shift covered in our report on [UK doctors by gender, age and ethnicity](#). Trainees face heavy workloads and high burnout risk: in the GMC National Training Survey 2026, 19 percent of trainees were at high risk of burnout and 61 percent at high or moderate risk, with the highest levels in emergency medicine. These pressures, and the competition for posts, are covered in our report on [burnout among UK doctors](#). Pay for each training grade is set out in our report on [UK doctor pay](#).

Medical training in numbers

- 25,770 applicants for medicine for 2026 entry, up 10.4 percent (UCAS).
- About 8,000 first-year medical students a year in England.
- 11,286 eligible applicants allocated a foundation post for 2026, 98 percent.
- 37,689 appointable applications for 9,520 specialty posts in 2026.
- 79,171 doctors in training in the UK in 2024, 28 percent of them qualified abroad.

OUTLOOK

Outlook

The training pipeline is being reshaped from both ends. More medical school places are planned, which will increase the number of UK graduates seeking foundation and specialty posts from the late 2020s, while prioritisation narrows the route for international graduates. Unless the number of specialty training posts grows, competition for UK graduates will rise again. The number of training places, GP posts and consultant jobs will determine whether the expansion translates into a larger qualified workforce. Our report on the [GP workforce](#) shows the same pressure in general practice.



KEY FACTS

UK medical training in numbers

Key Facts

- Medicine applications reached a record 25,770 for 2026 entry.
- England had about 8,045 first-year medical students in 2024, against 7,500 baseline funded places.
- 98 percent of eligible foundation applicants were placed for 2026; 188 were not.
- Specialty training applicants rose from about 12,000 in 2019 to nearly 40,000.
- Core psychiatry had 21.83 applications per post in 2025, up from 9.45 in 2024.
- Prioritised candidates filled 98 percent of specialty posts in 2026, up from 72 percent.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How competitive is specialty training in the UK?

Very. Applicants rose from about 12,000 in 2019 to nearly 40,000. In 2026 there were 37,689 appointable applications for 9,520 posts, about four per post.

Which specialty is most competitive?

Among large programmes, core psychiatry (21.83 applications per post) and ophthalmology (21.54) were most competitive in 2025. Small programmes such as cardiothoracic surgery (73.7) were even more contested.

How many people apply to study medicine?

25,770 people applied to study medicine by the October deadline for 2026 entry, a record and 10.4 percent more than the year before.



How many medical school places are there?

Funded medical school places in England were set at 7,500 a year in 2020, with extra places added since. About 8,045 students started medicine in England in 2024.

Does everyone get a foundation programme place?

Almost. For 2026, 98 percent of eligible applicants were allocated a foundation programme, while 188 applicants were not placed.

What is the Medical Training Prioritisation Act?

It is a 2026 law giving UK medical graduates and some other groups priority for foundation and specialty training posts. In 2026 prioritised candidates filled 98 percent of specialty posts.

How long does it take to become a consultant in the UK?

After five or six years of medical school and two foundation years, specialty training typically takes five to eight years, so about 12 to 16 years in total.

How many doctors are in training in the UK?

In 2024 there were 79,171 licensed doctors in training, of whom 57,144 qualified in the UK and 22,027 abroad.

SOURCES

[UCAS](#) - Record demand for early deadline courses, October 2025.

[UCAS](#) - 15 October deadline data, November 2024.

[Department of Health and Social Care](#) - 350 extra medical school places allocated.

[UK Foundation Programme Office](#) - 2026 foundation programme allocation.

[UK Foundation Programme Office](#) - 2025 foundation programme allocation.

[NHS England](#) - Specialty training competition ratios 2025.

[NHS England](#) - Specialty training competition ratios 2024.

[NHS England](#) - Medical Training Prioritisation Bill: information for applicants.

[NHS England](#) - Impact of the Medical Training Prioritisation Act, June 2026.

[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2025.

STATISTICS REPORT

General practitioners in the United Kingdom statistics & facts

The front door of the NHS under pressure. More than 82,000 doctors are on the UK GP register, but England has about as many fully qualified GPs as in 2015 while patient lists keep growing. Partners are leaving and training demand is soaring. This report sets out the numbers.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/uk-gp-statistics

82,415 GP REGISTER 2025	29,223 FQ GPS ENGLAND (FTE)	15,057 GP PARTNERS (FTE)
2,160 PATIENTS PER GP	£164,200 PARTNER INCOME	43% STRUGGLING WEEKLY

OVERVIEW

GPs in the UK at a glance

General practitioners are the front door of the NHS, yet their numbers have barely kept pace with demand. At the end of 2025, 82,415 doctors were on the General Medical Council (GMC) GP register, up from 77,659 in 2020. In England, NHS England Digital counted 29,223 full-time equivalent (FTE) fully qualified GPs in August 2026, about the same number as in 2015, while the number of registered patients has grown to more than 63.1 million. GPs also report the heaviest workload of any group of doctors: in 2025, 43 percent were struggling to cope at least once a week, compared with 30 percent of all doctors. This report sets out the key numbers on the GP workforce, earnings, wellbeing and training. For the wider medical workforce, see our overview of [doctors in the United Kingdom](#).

A GP must hold a licence to practise and be on the GMC GP register, which normally requires completing at least three years of GP specialty training after the foundation programme. GPs work either as partners, who run their practice as a business and share its profits, as salaried GPs employed by a practice, or as locums who cover sessions. The balance between these roles has shifted markedly over the last decade, with fewer partners and more salaried doctors.



82,415

Doctors on the GP register

UK, end of 2025.

29,223

Fully qualified GPs, England

FTE, August 2026.

2,160

Patients per FTE GP

England, BMA analysis of NHS data.

43%

GPs struggling with workload

Weekly, GMC 2025.

GP REGISTER

The GP register since 2020

The number of doctors on the GP register grew slowly in the 2020s. It stood at 77,659 at the end of 2020 and rose to 79,685 in 2021, before dipping to 78,619 in 2022. It then increased to 80,562 in 2023, slipped slightly to 80,237 in 2024 and reached 82,415 in 2025, an increase of 2.7 percent in the year. The register includes all doctors with GP status, whether or not they hold a licence or currently work in UK general practice, so it is larger than the number of practising GPs.

Doctors on the GMC GP register, 2020 to 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-gp-statistics

Slow growth: The GP register grew by about 4,800 doctors, or 6 percent, between 2020 and 2025.

New entrants are increasingly trained in the UK. In 2025 the GMC received 4,023 applications to join the GP register, 3.9 percent fewer than in 2024, and 49.4 percent of applicants had qualified in the UK. The female share of GPs has risen strongly: 58 percent of doctors on the GP register in 2024 were women, compared with 48 percent of GPs in 2012, and 60 percent of GP trainees in 2023 were women. More detail on gender and ethnicity is in our report on [the demographics of UK doctors](#).

ENGLAND

The GP workforce in England

NHS England Digital publishes monthly data on the general practice workforce in England. In August 2026 there were 40,515 FTE GPs in total, or 52,538 individuals. Of these, 29,223 FTE were fully qualified GPs and

roughly 11,300 were GPs in training. Excluding training grades and locums, there were 28,598 FTE qualified permanent GPs. The number of fully qualified GPs rose by 2.9 percent in the year to August 2026, but it remains close to its 2015 level: according to BMA analysis of the same data, there were 142 fewer fully qualified FTE GPs in August 2026 than in September 2015.

GPs in England by type, August 2026 (FTE)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-gp-statistics

A quarter still in training: About 11,300 of 40,515 FTE GPs in England were GP trainees.

The wider practice team has grown much faster than the number of GPs. The total general practice workforce in England, including nurses, pharmacists, physiotherapists and administrative staff, reached 152,528 FTE in August 2026, or 202,777 people. Many of the new roles are funded through the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme, and some GPs are now funded through it too: according to the BMA, 1,429 FTE GPs were funded through the scheme in July 2026.

MEASURE (ENGLAND, AUGUST 2026)	FTE	HEADCOUNT
All GPs	40,515	52,538
Fully qualified GPs	29,223	40,758
Qualified permanent GPs	28,598	39,606
Total general practice workforce	152,528	202,777

PARTNERS

The decline of the GP partnership

The traditional partnership model is shrinking. According to BMA analysis of NHS England data, there were 15,057 FTE GP partners in August 2026, down from 15,393 a year earlier and almost 6,600 fewer than in 2015. Over the same period, the number of practices in England fell to 6,143, with 1,480 practices closing or merging since 2015, so the average practice is now much larger. Partners carry the financial risk of running a practice, including premises and staff costs, and many younger GPs now prefer salaried or locum work.

Fewer GPs per patient means more pressure on each doctor. The BMA calculates that there were 2,160 patients for every fully qualified FTE GP in England in 2026, an increase of 222, or 11.5 percent, since 2015.



In London the figure was 2,450. NHS England Digital counted 63,119,653 patients registered at GP practices on 1 September 2026.

General practice in England: the long view

- 142 fewer fully qualified FTE GPs in August 2026 than in September 2015 (BMA analysis).
- Almost 6,600 fewer FTE GP partners than in 2015 (BMA analysis).
- 1,480 practices closed or merged since 2015, leaving 6,143.
- 2,160 patients per fully qualified FTE GP, up 11.5 percent since 2015.
- 63.1 million patients registered with a GP practice in September 2026.

NATIONS

GPs in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Each UK nation counts its GP workforce differently. In Wales, the Welsh Government reported 1,635 FTE fully qualified GPs at the end of March 2026, an increase of 55, or 3.5 percent, on a year earlier. The GMC counted 2,945 doctors with a licence on the GP register working in Wales in February 2025. Scotland and Northern Ireland publish their own general practice statistics using headcount and different definitions, so direct comparisons with England should be made with care. Doctor numbers by nation are covered in our [overview of UK doctors](#).

EARNINGS

What GPs earn

GP partners earn more than salaried GPs but carry business risk. According to NHS England Digital, the average income before tax of contractor GPs in England was 164,200 pounds in 2024/25, up from 158,700 pounds in 2023/24. Salaried GPs earned 74,800 pounds on average, up from 72,200 pounds. The averages hide wide variation, because many GPs work part time: income per GP is not the same as pay for full-time work. The recommended salary range for salaried GPs in England in 2026/27 is 78,699 to 118,759 pounds for full-time work. Pay across all grades and nations is compared in our report on [UK doctor pay](#).



Average income before tax of GPs in England, 2023/24 and 2024/25 (pounds)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-gp-statistics

Rising incomes: Contractor GP income rose 3.5 percent and salaried GP income 3.6 percent in 2024/25.

PRESSURE

Workload and wellbeing

Surveys consistently show that GPs are the most pressured group of doctors. In the GMC Barometer survey, 80 percent of GPs worked beyond their rostered hours at least once a week in 2024, against 62 percent of all doctors, and 47 percent felt unable to cope with their workload weekly, against 33 percent. In 2025, 43 percent of GPs were classed as struggling and 60 percent found it difficult to provide sufficient patient care at least once a week, compared with 41 percent of all doctors. Dissatisfaction was also highest among GPs, at 47 percent in 2025.

Workload pressures on GPs compared with all doctors (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-gp-statistics

GPs under most strain: Six in ten GPs struggle to provide sufficient care every week, against four in ten doctors overall.

There are some positives. GPs report more autonomy than other doctors, with 71 percent saying they have enough in 2025, and 77 percent feel part of a supportive team. The share of GPs at high risk of burnout fell from 31 percent in 2022 to 21 percent in 2023. The Royal College of General Practitioners reported in November 2025 that 28 percent of GPs feel so stressed they cannot cope at least once a week, that 73 percent believe workload pressures compromise patient safety and that nearly a third are unlikely to be working in general practice in five years. Our report on [burnout among UK doctors](#) covers the full survey data.

Like all doctors, GPs must take part in annual appraisal and revalidate their licence every five years, which includes keeping up to date through continuing professional development. Appraisal evidence typically covers learning activities, quality improvement, feedback and reflection on significant events. Online options such as [CPD courses for healthcare professionals](#) are one way GPs record learning on topics like



communication, consent and probity.

TRAINING

The GP training pipeline

Demand for GP training places has soared. In 2024 there were 15,036 applications for 4,096 GP specialty training posts in England, a ratio of 3.67 applications per post. In 2025 applications rose to 20,995 for 4,276 posts, a ratio of 4.91. Of the 14,497 appointable applicants in 2025, 4,534 were UK graduates. Following the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act, 100 percent of GP training posts in 2026 were accepted by UK graduates or doctors already working in the NHS, compared with 62 percent in 2025. More on training competition is in our report on [specialty training in the UK](#).

Applications and posts for GP specialty training in England, 2024 and 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-gp-statistics

Five applications per post: GP training applications rose 40 percent in a year while posts grew by 4 percent.

OUTLOOK

Outlook

The government has promised more GPs and an end to the so-called 8am scramble for appointments, and the number of fully qualified GPs is finally rising after a decade of stagnation. At the same time, experienced partners continue to leave and the number of patients per GP keeps rising. The balance between these trends will decide whether general practice recovers. Related data on [international doctors](#), many of whom work in general practice, and on [doctors leaving the UK](#) is available in our related reports.

KEY FACTS

UK GPs in numbers

Key Facts

- 82,415 doctors were on the GMC GP register at the end of 2025, up 2.7 percent in a year.
- England had 29,223 FTE fully qualified GPs in August 2026, close to the 2015 level.
- There were 2,160 patients per fully qualified FTE GP in England, up 11.5 percent since 2015.
- Contractor GPs in England earned 164,200 pounds before tax on average in 2024/25.
- 43 percent of GPs were struggling with their workload weekly in 2025.
- GP training applications reached 20,995 for 4,276 posts in 2025.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many GPs are there in the UK?

At the end of 2025, 82,415 doctors were on the GMC GP register. Not all of them practise in UK general practice. In England, there were 29,223 FTE fully qualified GPs in August 2026.

Is the number of GPs falling?

The number of fully qualified GPs in England has been broadly flat since 2015 and rose 2.9 percent in the year to August 2026. GP partners have fallen by almost 6,600 FTE since 2015, according to the BMA.

How many patients does each GP have?

According to BMA analysis of NHS England data, there were 2,160 patients per fully qualified FTE GP in England in 2026, up 11.5 percent since 2015. In London the figure was 2,450.

How much do GPs earn?

Contractor GP partners in England earned 164,200 pounds before tax on average in 2024/25, and salaried GPs 74,800 pounds. The salaried GP range for full-time work is 78,699 to 118,759 pounds in 2026/27.

How many GP practices are there in England?

There were 6,143 GP practices in England in 2026, after 1,480 closed or merged since 2015, according to the BMA.

Are most GPs women?

Yes. 58 percent of doctors on the GP register in 2024 were women, up from 48 percent of GPs in 2012.



How competitive is GP training?

In 2025 there were 20,995 applications for 4,276 GP training posts, 4.91 per post. In 2026 all GP training posts were accepted by UK graduates or doctors already in the NHS.

How stressed are GPs?

In 2025, 43 percent of GPs were struggling with their workload weekly and 47 percent were dissatisfied with their work, according to the GMC.

SOURCES

[General Medical Council](#) - Annual report and accounts 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - Annual report 2024.

[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2025.

[NHS England Digital](#) - General Practice Workforce, 31 August 2026.

[NHS England Digital](#) - Patients registered at a GP practice, September 2026.

[NHS England Digital](#) - GP earnings and expenses estimates 2024/25.

[Welsh Government](#) - General practice workforce, March 2026.

[NHS England](#) - Specialty training competition ratios 2025.

[NHS England](#) - Impact of the Medical Training Prioritisation Act, June 2026.

[General Medical Council](#) - SoMEP Barometer survey 2025.

[Royal College of General Practitioners](#) - GP Voice survey, November 2025.

STATISTICS REPORT

Physicians in the United Kingdom statistics & facts

A growing, changing and stretched profession. More than 410,000 doctors are on the UK medical register, the NHS employs more doctors than ever, and the profession is more female and more international than at any time in its history. Yet the UK still has fewer doctors per head than most peers, and many are thinking of leaving. This report sets out the key numbers.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

410,566 ON GMC REGISTER	328,149 LICENSED DOCTORS	192,732 NHS ENGLAND FTE
3.4 PER 1,000 PEOPLE	42% QUALIFIED ABROAD	50.04% WOMEN

OVERVIEW

Doctors in the UK: the headline numbers

The United Kingdom has more doctors than at any point in its history. At the end of 2025, 410,566 doctors were on the medical register kept by the General Medical Council (GMC), up 4.4 percent in a year, and 328,149 held a licence to practise at the end of 2024, an increase of 35 percent since 2017. In England alone, the NHS employed 192,732 full-time equivalent (FTE) doctors in hospitals and general practice in September 2025, compared with 138,890 in 2015. Yet the UK still has fewer doctors per head of population than most comparable countries, and surveys show a profession under heavy strain.

The profession is also changing in character. In 2024, for the first time, women made up the majority of licensed doctors. In 2023 doctors from ethnic minority backgrounds outnumbered white doctors. Forty-two percent of licensed doctors qualified abroad, and two-thirds of doctors taking up a licence for the first time now come from outside the UK. At the same time, a record 16,124 doctors gave up their licence in 2024, the GMC received a record 13,465 concerns about doctors in 2025, and resident doctors in England only ended a three-year pay dispute in June 2026.



This report brings together the most important statistics on physicians in the United Kingdom: the size and growth of the medical register, how doctors are distributed across registers, nations and regions, international comparisons, characteristics, specialties, pay, wellbeing, migration and regulation. Each section links to a dedicated report with more detail and charts.

410,566

Doctors on the GMC register

End of 2025, up 4.4%.

328,149

Licensed doctors

End of 2024, up 35% since 2017.

192,732

NHS England doctors (FTE)

Hospitals and general practice, Sep 2025.

3.4

Doctors per 1,000 people

UK, OECD average 3.9.

REGISTER

The medical register and licensed doctors

Every doctor who practises medicine in the UK must be registered with the GMC and hold a licence to practise. The register also includes doctors who are registered but do not hold a licence, for example because they work abroad, have retired or do not currently need to practise. At the end of 2025 there were 410,566 doctors on the register, with or without a licence, compared with 393,357 at the end of 2024 and 378,054 at the end of 2023. Back in 2011 the register held 245,903 doctors, so it has grown by two-thirds in fourteen years.

The number of licensed doctors, those entitled to practise, is the best measure of the active workforce. It was broadly flat between 2012 and 2016 at around 235,000 to 238,000, before rising every year since: to 260,320 in 2019, 283,663 in 2021, 313,829 in 2023 and 328,149 in 2024. The increase of almost 91,000 licensed doctors between 2016 and 2024 reflects larger medical school intakes and, above all, international recruitment.

Licensed doctors in the UK, 2012 to 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

A decade of growth: The number of licensed doctors rose from 236,244 in 2012 to 328,149 in 2024.

The register has also expanded to include new professions. Since December 2024 the GMC has regulated physician associates and anaesthesia associates, who work alongside doctors but are not doctors themselves. By 31 December 2025 the GMC had registered 3,909 physician associates and 180 anaesthesia associates. Their role, and how their regulation differs from that of doctors, is explained in this [guide to GMC regulation of physician associates](#).

YEAR	DOCTORS ON THE REGISTER	LICENSED DOCTORS
2011	245,903	232,769
2017		242,642
2019	311,356	260,320
2021	350,976	283,663
2023	378,054	313,829
2024	393,357	328,149
2025	410,566	

The pandemic left a visible mark on the register. To support the NHS response to COVID-19, the GMC granted temporary emergency registration to doctors who had recently left practice or were close to qualifying. In 2020, 25,307 doctors held temporary registration, falling to 22,713 in 2021, 9,117 in 2022 and 8,447 in 2023 as the arrangements were wound down. These doctors are counted separately from fully registered and licensed doctors.

Inflows to the register remain at record levels. The GMC added 24,812 new registrants in 2025. It also received 5,880 applications to join the specialist register, 6.6 percent more than in 2024, of which 58.6 percent came from UK-qualified doctors, and 4,023 applications to join the GP register, 3.9 percent fewer than a year earlier, of which 49.4 percent were from UK graduates. Applications to the specialist register from doctors who trained outside the formal UK training system have become an important route to consultant posts.

STRUCTURE

GPs, specialists, trainees and other doctors

Doctors on the register fall into broad groups. Fully trained GPs are listed on the GP register and consultants and other fully trained specialists on the specialist register. Doctors in training are working towards one of these, while a large group of doctors is on neither register and not in a formal training post. This last group includes specialty and specialist (SAS) doctors and locally employed doctors, many of whom are international graduates. In 2024, of 328,149 licensed doctors, 79,171 were in training and 87,151 were on neither register and not in training, leaving about 161,800 on the GP or specialist registers.

Licensed doctors in the UK by register group, 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

Half are fully registered specialists or GPs: About 161,800 licensed doctors are on the GP or specialist registers.

The fastest-growing group has been doctors on neither register. Their number rose by 8 percent to 87,151 in 2024, after increases of more than 6,000 and 10,000 in the two previous years. In England and Wales, the number of locally employed doctors in this group rose from 11,892 in 2014 to 38,394 in 2024. On the established registers, growth has been steadier. The specialist register grew from 104,383 at the end of 2020 to 115,587 at the end of 2025, while the GP register rose from 77,659 to 82,415. Our report on [GP statistics](#) covers general practice in detail, and our report on [specialty training](#) the pipeline into both registers.

Doctors on the GP and specialist registers, 2020 to 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

Specialists grow faster: The specialist register grew 11 percent between 2020 and 2025, the GP register 6 percent.

ENGLAND

Doctors working in the NHS in England

The NHS in England is by far the largest employer of doctors in the UK. According to figures given by the government to Parliament, the number of FTE doctors working in hospitals, community services and general practice in England rose from 138,890 in September 2015 to 192,732 in September 2025, an increase of 39 percent. Growth accelerated after 2019, with between about 7,800 and 8,800 FTE doctors added in each of the last three years.

Doctors employed by the NHS in England, 2015 to 2025 (FTE)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

Up 39 percent in ten years: NHS England employed 192,732 FTE doctors in 2025, against 138,890 in 2015.

The mix of doctors has shifted towards hospitals. GPs made up 21 percent of FTE doctors in England in 2015 but only 15 percent in 2025, while consultants remained at around 31 percent and SAS doctors rose from 6 to 7 percent. The remaining share is made up mainly of resident doctors in training. In hospital and community health services alone, NHS England employed 153,389 FTE doctors in April 2026. London had the largest number with 31,667, followed by the Midlands with 27,100 and the North East and Yorkshire with 22,829.

Hospital and community doctors in England by NHS region, April 2026 (FTE)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

London leads: One in five NHS hospital doctors in England works in London.

Despite growth, vacancies remain. According to BMA analysis of NHS England vacancy statistics, there were 9,390 medical vacancies in June 2026, 5.6 percent of medical posts, and there were 48,500 more FTE secondary care doctors in July 2026 than in September 2015. Workforce growth has not removed pressure on services, because demand has risen as well.

NATIONS

Doctors in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Health is devolved, and each nation publishes its own workforce statistics using different definitions, so figures cannot simply be added together. In Scotland, NHS Scotland employed 16,569.8 whole-time equivalent (WTE) medical and dental staff at the end of March 2026, an increase of 4 percent, and the GMC counted 24,368 licensed doctors in Scotland in 2024. In Wales, NHS Wales employed 8,833 FTE medical and dental staff at the end of March 2026, up 2.6 percent, including 1,635 FTE fully qualified GPs. In Northern Ireland, health and social care bodies employed 5,511.7 WTE medical and dental staff in June 2026, up 6.4 percent, including 2,154 WTE consultants.

NATION	MEASURE	LATEST FIGURE	DATE
England	FTE doctors, hospitals and general practice	192,732	September 2025
England	FTE hospital and community doctors	153,389	April 2026
Scotland	WTE medical and dental staff, NHS Scotland	16,569.8	March 2026
Scotland	GMC licensed doctors	24,368	2024
Wales	FTE medical and dental staff, NHS Wales	8,833	March 2026
Northern Ireland	WTE medical and dental staff, HSC	5,511.7	June 2026

The gender balance also differs between nations. Women made up 54.8 percent of licensed doctors in Scotland in 2024 and 53.5 percent in Northern Ireland, but 49.7 percent in England and 47.3 percent in Wales. More detail is in our report on [UK doctors by gender, age and ethnicity](#).

INTERNATIONAL

How the UK compares internationally

By international standards, the UK has relatively few doctors. According to the OECD Health at a Glance 2025 report, the UK had 3.4 practising doctors per 1,000 population in 2023, below the OECD average of 3.9. Italy had 5.4, Germany 4.7, Spain 4.4, Australia 4.2 and France 3.9. Only Canada and the United States, each with 2.7, had fewer among the countries compared. Closing the gap with the OECD average would require tens of thousands of additional doctors, which is one reason for the planned expansion of medical school places.

Practising doctors per 1,000 population, selected countries, 2023

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

Below the OECD average: The UK has 3.4 doctors per 1,000 people, against 4.7 in Germany and 5.4 in Italy.

PROFESSIONS

Doctors among the UK health professions

Doctors are the second-largest regulated health profession in the UK after nurses and midwives. According to the Professional Standards Authority, which oversees the nine health and care regulators, the GMC had 415,428 registrants at the end of March 2026. The Nursing and Midwifery Council had 867,935, the Health and Care Professions Council, which covers 15 professions from physiotherapists to paramedics, 367,535, and the General Dental Council 132,296. In total the nine health regulators, together with Social Work England, oversaw about 2 million registrants.

Registrants of UK health and care professional regulators, March 2026

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

Second only to nurses: The GMC register is the second largest of the UK health and care regulators.

CHARACTERISTICS

Who UK doctors are

The profile of UK doctors has changed rapidly. In 2024, female licensed doctors outnumbered male doctors for the first time, at 50.04 percent. Women are the majority in obstetrics and gynaecology (63 percent), paediatrics (61 percent) and general practice (58 percent), but only 17 percent of doctors in surgery. In 2023, 47.6 percent of licensed doctors came from ethnic minority backgrounds and 47.0 percent were white, with Asian or Asian British doctors the largest minority group at 32.2 percent. Doctors in their thirties were the largest age group, at 34.2 percent. The full figures are in our report on [the demographics of UK doctors](#).

Place of qualification is the other major change. In 2024, 138,405 licensed doctors, 42 percent, had qualified outside the UK, compared with 33 percent in 2017. International medical graduates have outnumbered UK graduates among new licence holders every year since 2019, and in 2024 they accounted for 18,630 first-time licences against 9,237 for UK graduates. The largest sources are India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Egypt and Bangladesh. Our report on [international doctors in the UK](#) covers this in detail.

Licensed doctors in the UK by place of qualification, 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-statistics

42 percent trained abroad: 138,405 of 328,149 licensed doctors obtained their primary qualification outside the UK.

TRAINING

Training and specialties

The pipeline into the profession is under pressure at the specialty training stage. A record 25,770 people applied to study medicine for 2026 entry, and 98 percent of eligible applicants were allocated a foundation programme place for 2026. But applicants for specialty training rose from about 12,000 in 2019 to nearly 40,000, competing for around 10,000 posts. In 2025, core psychiatry attracted 21.83 applications per post, anaesthetics 12.56 and GP training 4.91. From 2026, the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act gives UK graduates priority, and prioritised candidates filled 98 percent of specialty posts in 2026. Details are in our report on [specialty training in the UK](#).

General practice faces particular challenges. In England there were 29,223 FTE fully qualified GPs in August 2026, broadly the same as in 2015, while the number of patients per GP rose to 2,160, according to BMA analysis of NHS England data. GP partners have declined by almost 6,600 FTE since 2015. See our report on [GP statistics](#) for the full picture.

PAY

Doctor pay

Doctors are paid on national pay scales that now differ between the four nations. In England in 2026/27, a first-year foundation doctor earns a basic salary of 41,226 pounds and a consultant between 113,565 and



150,569 pounds. The independent pay review body recommended a 3.5 percent rise for most doctors for 2026/27. Resident doctors in England took 15 rounds of strike action between 2023 and April 2026 before accepting a deal in June 2026. Contractor GPs in England earned 164,200 pounds before tax on average in 2024/25, and salaried GPs 74,800 pounds. Our report on [UK doctor pay](#) sets out pay scales and awards by grade and nation.

WELLBEING

Satisfaction and burnout

Surveys show a profession under strain. In the GMC Barometer survey 2025, 55 percent of doctors were at least somewhat satisfied with their day-to-day work, down from 75 percent in 2020, and 20 percent were at high risk of burnout. Sixty-one percent worked beyond their rostered hours at least weekly, and 39 percent had witnessed patient safety or care being compromised. GPs and locally employed doctors reported the greatest pressure, and among trainees, 30 percent of those in emergency medicine were at high risk of burnout. The full survey data are in our report on [burnout among UK doctors](#).



MIGRATION

Joiners and leavers

The UK medical workforce depends on a large inflow of new doctors to offset rising departures. In 2024, 30,444 doctors joined the UK medical workforce, while 16,124 stopped holding a licence, up from 9,667 in 2019. Leavers who had been working in the UK included 5,793 UK graduates and 4,880 international graduates, the latter up 26 percent in a year. Practising abroad has overtaken retirement as the most common reason for leaving, and Australia is the top destination. In 2025, 22 percent of doctors said they

were likely to leave UK practice in the next year. See our report on [doctors leaving the UK](#).

REGULATION

Regulation and fitness to practise

The GMC sets the professional standards that all doctors must meet, published as Good medical practice, and decides whether doctors are fit to practise. Licensed doctors must take part in annual appraisal and revalidate every five years, drawing on continuing professional development, feedback and reflection; options such as [GMC CPD and remediation courses for doctors](#) are one way doctors evidence learning. When a concern is raised, the GMC can investigate and refer cases to independent tribunals run by the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service.

In 2025 the GMC received a record 13,465 concerns about doctors, 25 percent more than in 2024. About 87 percent were closed at initial triage, 997 led to a full investigation, case examiners referred 184 cases to a tribunal, and tribunals erased 48 doctors and suspended 68. Concerns related to about 3 percent of registered doctors. A step-by-step explanation of what happens to a doctor during this process is available in this guide to [GMC fitness to practise](#), and the full statistics in our report on [GMC fitness to practise statistics](#).

MEASURE	2023	2024	2025
Concerns received	10,031	10,769	13,465
Investigations after provisional enquiries	814	906	997
Referred to tribunal	210	169	184
Erasures	60	67	48
Suspensions	109	76	68

TIMELINE

Milestones for the UK medical profession

The statistics in this report reflect a series of changes to how doctors are trained, regulated and employed. The table below lists some of the milestones behind the numbers, from the creation of the medical register to the policy changes of 2026.

YEAR	MILESTONE
1858	The Medical Act creates the General Medical Council and the medical register
2012	Revalidation introduced, requiring licensed doctors to revalidate every five years
2019	International medical graduates outnumber UK graduates among new licence holders for the first time
2020	Temporary emergency registration for 25,307 doctors during COVID-19
2023	Ethnic minority doctors outnumber white doctors on the licensed register
2024	Women become the majority of licensed doctors; GMC begins regulating physician associates and anaesthesia associates
2025	Record 13,465 concerns about doctors received by the GMC
2026	Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act gives UK graduates priority; resident doctors in England accept a pay deal

OUTLOOK

Outlook

The UK medical workforce is larger and more diverse than ever, but it faces three linked challenges. The first is capacity: despite rapid growth, the UK remains below the OECD average for doctors per head, and demand continues to rise with an ageing population. The second is retention: record numbers of doctors are leaving, younger UK graduates are increasingly heading abroad, and international doctors are leaving at a faster rate. The third is the training pipeline: the expansion of medical school places will only increase the number of qualified doctors if there are enough foundation, specialty and GP training posts.

Several policy changes will shape the next few years. The Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act changes who gets training posts. The 2026 resident doctor pay deal aims to end industrial action and improve retention. The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan targets 15,000 medical school places by 2031. And the GMC continues to expand its role to cover physician associates and anaesthesia associates. The next GMC workforce report, expected in late 2026, and the 2026 Barometer survey will show whether the trends of recent years continue.



KEY FACTS

UK doctors in numbers

Key Facts

- 410,566 doctors were on the GMC register at the end of 2025; 328,149 held a licence at the end of 2024.
- NHS England employed 192,732 FTE doctors in September 2025, up 39 percent since 2015.
- The UK has 3.4 practising doctors per 1,000 people, below the OECD average of 3.9.
- Women became the majority of licensed doctors in 2024, and 42 percent of doctors qualified abroad.
- 20 percent of doctors were at high risk of burnout in 2025 and 16,124 gave up their licence in 2024.
- The GMC received a record 13,465 concerns in 2025; 48 doctors were erased.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many doctors are there in the UK?

At the end of 2025, 410,566 doctors were on the GMC medical register, with or without a licence. At the end of 2024, 328,149 doctors held a licence to practise.

How many doctors work in the NHS?

In England, the NHS employed 192,732 full-time equivalent doctors in hospitals, community services and general practice in September 2025. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland publish separate figures.

How many doctors per person does the UK have?

The UK had 3.4 practising doctors per 1,000 population in 2023, below the OECD average of 3.9, according to OECD Health at a Glance 2025.



How many GPs are there in the UK?

82,415 doctors were on the GMC GP register at the end of 2025. In England there were 29,223 FTE fully qualified GPs in August 2026.

Are most UK doctors women?

Yes, narrowly. In 2024 women made up 50.04 percent of licensed doctors, the first female majority in the history of the register.

What share of UK doctors trained abroad?

42 percent of licensed doctors, 138,405, obtained their primary medical qualification outside the UK in 2024.

How much do UK doctors earn?

In England in 2026/27, a foundation year 1 doctor earns a basic 41,226 pounds and a consultant between 113,565 and 150,569 pounds.

How many doctors leave the UK each year?

16,124 doctors stopped holding a UK licence in 2024, up from 9,667 in 2019. Practising abroad is now the most common reason given.

How many complaints about doctors does the GMC receive?

The GMC received a record 13,465 concerns in 2025. Most were closed at triage; 184 cases were referred to a tribunal and 48 doctors were erased.

What are physician associates?

Physician associates are healthcare professionals who work alongside doctors. The GMC has regulated them since December 2024 and had registered 3,909 by the end of 2025.

SOURCES

[General Medical Council](#) - Annual report and accounts 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2025.

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[General Medical Council](#) - The state of medical education and practice 2012.

[UK Parliament](#) - Written answer HL15482, NHS doctors in England.

[NHS England Digital](#) - General Practice Workforce, August 2026.

[NHS Education for Scotland](#) - NHS Scotland workforce, March 2026.

[Welsh Government](#) - NHS Wales staff, March 2026.

[Department of Health Northern Ireland](#) - HSC workforce statistics, June 2026.

[OECD](#) - Health at a Glance 2025.

[Professional Standards Authority](#) - Annual Report and Accounts 2025/26.

[General Medical Council](#) - More female than male doctors, March 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - SoMEP Barometer survey 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - Fitness to practise statistics 2025.

STATISTICS REPORT

Pay of doctors in the United Kingdom statistics & facts

Pay scales, awards and a long dispute. A newly qualified doctor in England earns 41,226 pounds basic in 2026/27 and a senior consultant up to 150,569 pounds. Pay differs across the four nations, and the resident doctor dispute only ended in June 2026. This report sets out the numbers.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/uk-doctors-pay

£41,226 FY1, ENGLAND	£47,610 FY2, ENGLAND	£150,569 TOP CONSULTANT
3.5% DDRB 2026/27	£164,200 GP PARTNER INCOME	15 STRIKE ROUNDS

OVERVIEW

UK doctor pay at a glance

Doctors in the UK are paid according to national pay scales that differ by grade and by nation. In England, a newly qualified doctor in the first foundation year earns a basic salary of 41,226 pounds in 2026/27, while a consultant earns between 113,565 and 150,569 pounds. Basic pay is only part of the picture: resident doctors typically receive around 27 to 33 percent of their total earnings from extra pay for night shifts, weekends and additional hours. Pay has also been the subject of a long-running dispute, with resident doctors in England taking 15 rounds of strike action between 2023 and April 2026 before accepting a deal in June 2026. This report sets out pay scales, awards and earnings for every grade. For the size and structure of the profession, see our overview of [doctors in the United Kingdom](#).

Pay is set each year after recommendations from the independent Review Body on Doctors and Dentists Remuneration (DDRB), which the UK government and the devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can accept, change or reject. As a result, pay scales and the timing of awards now differ noticeably between the four nations. All figures in this report are basic annual salaries for full-time work unless stated otherwise.

£41,226
FY1 basic pay, England

2026/27, after the June 2026 deal.

£150,569
Top consultant point

England, 2026/27.

3.5%
DDRB award 2026/27

For most doctor groups.

15
Rounds of resident strikes

England, 2023 to April 2026.

ENGLAND

Pay scales in England, 2026/27

Resident doctors, formerly known as junior doctors, are paid on the 2016 contract. From April 2026 the pay structure was reformed into ten points as part of the deal accepted in June 2026. A first-year foundation doctor (FY1) earns 41,226 pounds and a second-year foundation doctor (FY2) 47,610 pounds. Doctors in specialty training then progress through points worth 55,355 pounds, 67,325 to 67,998 pounds and 76,582 to 77,348 pounds. Senior doctors are paid on separate contracts: specialty doctors earn 63,696 to 102,689 pounds, specialists 104,401 to 115,341 pounds and consultants 113,565 to 150,569 pounds.

Basic pay of NHS doctors in England by grade, 2026/27 (pounds)

 Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-pay

From 41,000 to 150,000 pounds: A consultant at the top of the scale earns more than three and a half times an FY1 doctor.

GRADE (ENGLAND)	2025/26	2026/27
Foundation year 1	£38,831	£41,226
Foundation year 2	£44,439	£47,610
Specialty training, point 3	£52,656	£55,355
Specialty training, point 4	£65,048	£67,325 to £67,998
Specialty training, point 5	£73,992	£76,582 to £77,348

Specialty doctor	£61,542 to £99,216	£63,696 to £102,689
Consultant	£109,725 to £145,478	£113,565 to £150,569
Salaried GP range	£76,038 to £114,743	£78,699 to £118,759

RESIDENT DOCTORS

Resident doctor pay and the 2026 deal

The June 2026 agreement combined the DDRB award of 3.5 percent with a reform of the pay structure. Compared with 2025/26, an FY1 doctor gains 2,395 pounds, or 6.2 percent, and an FY2 doctor 3,171 pounds, or 7.1 percent. According to the BMA, increases delivered by April 2027 average 6.6 percent across resident grades, ranging from 3.5 percent to 9.8 percent depending on the stage of training. The deal was accepted by 53 percent of members voting, on a turnout of 57 percent.

Basic pay of resident doctors in England, 2025/26 and 2026/27 (pounds)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-pay

Rises of 2,000 to 3,200 pounds: Every resident grade gained, with the largest cash rise for FY2 doctors.

Basic pay understates what resident doctors actually earn. Extra payments for unsocial hours, weekends, on-call and additional rostered hours typically make up 27 to 33 percent of their total earnings, according to analyses of NHS England earnings data. The government put average full-time basic pay for resident doctors at about 54,300 pounds in 2025/26 and said their pay had risen by 28.9 percent on average over three years. For comparison, the average basic pay of all NHS staff in England was 44,744 pounds per full-time equivalent in the year to July 2026. Inflation over the same period is tracked in our report on [inflation in the UK](#).

PAY AWARDS

Pay awards since 2023

Pay awards have been unusually large since 2023, after years of below-inflation rises. In 2023/24, resident doctors in England received 6 percent plus 1,250 pounds, later supplemented by an extra 4.05 percent on average, while consultants, salaried GPs and SAS doctors received 6 percent. In 2024/25 all groups received 6 percent, with residents also getting 1,000 pounds. In 2025/26 the award was 4 percent for all



groups, plus 750 pounds for residents. For 2026/27 the DDRB recommended 3.5 percent for residents, consultants, SAS doctors, locally employed doctors and GPs, which the government accepted in March 2026.

DDRDB pay awards for doctors in England, 2023/24 to 2026/27 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-pay

Smaller awards since 2024: Headline rises fell from 6 percent to 3.5 percent in 2026/27.

YEAR	RESIDENT DOCTORS	CONSULTANTS	SAS DOCTORS	GPS
2023/24	6% + 1,250 £ (plus 4.05% average later)	6%	6% (2021 contract 3%)	6% (salaried)
2024/25	6% + 1,000	6%	6%	6%
2025/26	4% + 750	4%	4%	4%
2026/27	3.5% plus pay structure reform	3.5%	3.5%	3.5%

NATIONS

Pay across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Pay now differs noticeably between the four nations. For consultants in 2026/27, the starting salary is 113,565 pounds in England, 115,331 pounds in Scotland and 114,099 pounds in Wales. The top of the scale is highest in Wales at 166,585 pounds, because the Welsh consultant scale has more points, compared with 153,247 pounds in Scotland and 150,569 pounds in England. Northern Ireland had not published a 2026/27 award at the time of writing; its 2025/26 consultant scale runs from 110,681 to 145,517 pounds, and consultants there took strike action in June 2026 after rejecting a 3.5 percent offer.

Consultant basic pay range by UK nation (pounds)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-pay

Wales pays most at the top: The highest consultant point reaches 166,585 pounds in Wales.

Starting pay for new doctors also differs. In 2026/27 an FY1 doctor earns 41,226 pounds in England and 41,400 pounds in Wales. In Scotland, where resident doctors received a 3.75 percent rise for 2026/27, FY1 pay ranges from 37,316 to 41,977 pounds depending on the point. In Northern Ireland the 2025/26 FY1



scale runs from 35,704 to 39,758 pounds.

GRADE	ENGLAND 2026/27	SCOTLAND 2026/27	WALES 2026/27	NORTHERN IRELAND 2025/26
Foundation year 1	£41,226	£37,316 to £41,977	£41,400	£35,704 to £39,758
Specialty doctor	£63,696 to £102,689	£66,404 to £103,475	£64,292 to £102,689	£61,542 to £99,216
Specialist	£104,401 to £115,341	£104,401 to £115,342	£104,401 to £115,343	£100,870 to £111,442
Consultant	£113,565 to £150,569	£115,331 to £153,247	£114,099 to £166,585	£110,681 to £145,517

G P S

What GPs earn

GPs are paid differently from hospital doctors. Salaried GPs are employed by practices and paid within a recommended range, which is 78,699 to 118,759 pounds in England in 2026/27. GP partners, also called contractor GPs, are self-employed and share the profits of their practice. According to NHS England Digital, the average income before tax of contractor GPs in England was 164,200 pounds in 2024/25, compared with 74,800 pounds for salaried GPs. Partners in Scotland earned 140,000 pounds on average, in Wales 134,900 pounds and in Northern Ireland 121,000 pounds. Our report on the [GP workforce](#) covers GP numbers and earnings in more detail.

Average income before tax of GPs by nation, 2024/25 (pounds)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-pay

Partners earn about twice as much: Contractor GPs in England averaged 164,200 pounds against 74,800 pounds for salaried GPs.

DISPUTE

Strikes and the real-terms pay debate

The pay dispute began in early 2023, when the BMA argued that resident doctor pay had fallen sharply in real terms since 2008. Resident doctors in England took 15 rounds of industrial action between 2023 and April 2026, including 15 days of strikes in 2025 according to the DDRB and a six-day strike from 7 to 13 April 2026. A planned strike in June 2026 was called off after the government offer, which members



accepted on 29 June 2026. The size of the real-terms fall is disputed. The BMA said resident doctors remain nearly a fifth behind 2008 pay levels, measured using the retail prices index. Full Fact, working with the Royal Statistical Society, estimated a smaller fall of about 6 to 7 percent using other measures, and the DDRB noted that 2008 was an historic peak. How the dispute affected morale is covered in our report on [burnout among UK doctors](#), and how pay influences decisions to emigrate in our report on [doctors leaving the UK](#).

The pay dispute in brief

- 15 rounds of resident doctor strikes in England between 2023 and April 2026 (BMA).
- 15 strike days in 2025 alone (DDRB).
- June 2026 deal accepted by 53 percent of voting members on a 57 percent turnout.
- Northern Ireland consultants struck on 25 June 2026 after rejecting a 3.5 percent award.
- Real-terms change since 2008 disputed: nearly a fifth (BMA, RPI) versus about 6 to 7 percent (Full Fact with RSS).

OUTLOOK

Outlook

With the resident doctor deal in place, attention is turning to how pay supports retention and training. The DDRB will report on 2027/28 pay in 2027. In Northern Ireland, the 2026/27 award was still unresolved in autumn 2026. Pay is one factor among many: in GMC surveys, doctors who plan to move abroad cite better treatment and quality of life alongside higher pay. Our related reports cover [international doctors](#), [specialty training](#) and [the demographics of UK doctors](#).

KEY FACTS

UK doctor pay in numbers

Key Facts



- An FY1 doctor in England earns 41,226 pounds basic in 2026/27, up from 38,831 pounds in 2025/26.
- Consultants in England earn 113,565 to 150,569 pounds; in Wales the top point is 166,585 pounds.
- The DDRB award for 2026/27 is 3.5 percent for most groups; Scottish resident doctors received 3.75 percent.
- Extra earnings typically add 27 to 33 percent to resident doctor basic pay.
- Contractor GPs in England averaged 164,200 pounds before tax in 2024/25; salaried GPs 74,800 pounds.
- Resident doctors in England held 15 rounds of strikes before accepting a deal in June 2026.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How much does a junior doctor earn in the UK?

In England, a first-year foundation doctor (FY1) earns a basic salary of 41,226 pounds in 2026/27 and an FY2 doctor 47,610 pounds. Extra pay for nights, weekends and extra hours typically adds 27 to 33 percent.

How much does an NHS consultant earn?

Consultants in England earn a basic 113,565 to 150,569 pounds in 2026/27. In Scotland the range is 115,331 to 153,247 pounds and in Wales 114,099 to 166,585 pounds.

What was the doctors pay rise for 2026/27?

The DDRB recommended 3.5 percent for most doctors, which the government accepted. Resident doctors in England also gained from a reform of the pay structure, averaging 6.6 percent by April 2027 according to the BMA.

How much do GPs earn in the UK?

Contractor GPs in England earned an average 164,200 pounds before tax in 2024/25, and salaried GPs 74,800 pounds. The salaried GP pay range in England is 78,699 to 118,759 pounds in 2026/27.

Do doctors earn more in Scotland or England?

It depends on the grade. Consultants start higher in Scotland (115,331 pounds) than England (113,565 pounds), but FY1 pay starts lower in Scotland at 37,316 pounds against 41,226 pounds in England.

Why did resident doctors strike?

The BMA argued that pay had fallen sharply in real terms since 2008. Resident doctors in England took 15 rounds of strike action between 2023 and April 2026 before accepting a deal in June 2026.

How much has doctor pay fallen since 2008?

The figure is disputed. The BMA says resident doctors are nearly a fifth behind 2008 levels using RPI, while Full Fact with the Royal Statistical Society estimated a fall of about 6 to 7 percent.

What is the DDRB?

The Review Body on Doctors and Dentists Remuneration is an independent body that recommends annual pay rises for doctors and dentists to the UK and devolved governments.

SOURCES

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[NHS Employers](#) - Pay and Conditions Circular (M&D) 2/2025.

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[Review Body on Doctors and Dentists Remuneration](#) - 54th Report 2026.

[NHS Employers](#) - Doctors and dentists pay award announcement 2026.

[Department of Health and Social Care](#) - Resident doctors pay award 2025 to 2026.

[NHS Scotland](#) - PCS(DD)2026/02 pay circular.

[NHS Scotland](#) - PCS(DD)2026/01 pay circular.

[NHS Wales](#) - M&D(W) 01/2026 pay award.

[Department of Health Northern Ireland](#) - HSC (TC8) 05/2025 pay circular.

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[NHS England Digital](#) - NHS staff earnings estimates, July 2026.

[BMA](#) - Resident doctors accept government offer, June 2026.



STATISTICS REPORT

Characteristics of doctors in the United Kingdom statistics & facts

A profession transformed. Women now make up the majority of licensed doctors in the UK, and doctors from ethnic minority backgrounds outnumber white doctors. Yet surgery remains overwhelmingly male and senior posts less diverse. This report sets out the numbers.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/uk-doctors-demographics

50.04% WOMEN, 2024	58% WOMEN IN TRAINING	40% WOMEN, SPECIALISTS
47.6% ETHNIC MINORITY	32.2% ASIAN DOCTORS	34.2% AGED 30 TO 39

OVERVIEW

Who are the UK doctors?

The UK medical profession has changed more in the last decade than at any time in its history. In 2024, for the first time since the medical register began more than 165 years ago, female licensed doctors outnumbered male doctors: 164,440 women against 164,195 men. A year earlier, in 2023, the number of doctors from ethnic minority backgrounds exceeded the number of white doctors for the first time. The profession is also getting younger, as record numbers of new doctors join from UK medical schools and from abroad. This report sets out the gender, age and ethnicity of UK doctors and how they vary by specialty and nation. For the size of the workforce, see our overview of [doctors in the United Kingdom](#).

The figures come mainly from the General Medical Council (GMC), which records the characteristics of every doctor on the medical register. Most data refer to licensed doctors, who are entitled to practise in the UK. Ethnicity is self-reported, and about 5 percent of doctors have not recorded it. The most detailed breakdowns by age and ethnicity currently available are for 2023, published in the GMC Workforce report 2024.



50.04%

Licensed doctors who are women

2024, first female majority.

47.6%

Ethnic minority doctors

2023, more than white doctors (47.0%).

34.2%

Doctors aged 30 to 39

2023, the largest age group.

17%

Women in surgery

2024, up from 9% in 2012.

GENDER

Women now make up the majority

The share of women among licensed doctors has risen steadily. In 2017, 114,575 of 242,642 licensed doctors were women, 47.2 percent. By 2023 the figure had grown to 154,826 out of 313,829, or 49.3 percent. In 2024 women became the majority, with 50.04 percent of licensed doctors as of February 2025. The trend reflects decades of medical school intakes in which women outnumber men: 60 percent of medical students starting in 2023/24 were women, and so were 52 percent of doctors who joined the register in 2023.

Share of women among licensed doctors in the UK, 2017 to 2024 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-demographics

A historic milestone: Women became the majority of licensed doctors in 2024.

The balance differs across the UK. In 2024, women made up 54.8 percent of licensed doctors in Scotland and 53.5 percent in Northern Ireland, but 49.7 percent in England and 47.3 percent in Wales. Because the full register also includes doctors without a licence, the GMC reported that men still made up 50.5 percent of all doctors on the register at the end of 2025.

Share of women among licensed doctors by UK nation, 2024 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-demographics

Scotland leads: Almost 55 percent of licensed doctors in Scotland are women.

SPECIALTY

Gender by specialty and career stage

Women are now the majority in general practice and in several hospital specialties, but remain a minority in others. In 2024, 63 percent of doctors in obstetrics and gynaecology were women, 61 percent in paediatrics and 59 percent in public health, according to the GMC. In general practice the share rose from 48 percent in 2012 to 58 percent in 2024. Surgery remains the most male-dominated specialty, with women making up 17 percent of licensed doctors, although that is almost double the 9 percent of 2012. Emergency medicine (37 percent), ophthalmology (35 percent) and anaesthetics and intensive care (38 percent) also have more men than women.

Share of women among licensed doctors by specialty, 2012 and 2024 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-demographics

Rising everywhere: The share of women grew in every specialty group, but surgery remains 83 percent male.

Career stage shows where the change is coming from. In 2024, women made up 58 percent of doctors in training and 58 percent of doctors on the GP register, but only 40 percent of doctors on the specialist register, where the most senior hospital doctors are. As the current generation of trainees reaches consultant level, the specialist register is likely to become more balanced. The number of women entering GP training is especially high: 60 percent of GP trainees in 2023 were women. Our report on the [GP workforce](#) covers general practice in detail.

GROUP (2024)	SHARE OF WOMEN
All licensed doctors	50%
Doctors in training	58%
GP register	58%
Specialist register	40%
Medical school intake 2023/24	60%



AGE

Age profile of UK doctors

The UK medical workforce is relatively young. In 2023 the largest age group was doctors in their thirties, with 107,267 licensed doctors or 34.2 percent of the total. There were 77,093 doctors in their forties (24.6 percent), 53,123 in their fifties (16.9 percent) and 49,577 in their twenties (15.8 percent). Doctors aged 60 to 69 numbered 22,279 (7.1 percent) and those aged 70 or over 4,490 (1.4 percent).

Licensed doctors in the UK by age group, 2019 and 2023

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-demographics

Growth at both ends: Doctors in their thirties grew by 28 percent between 2019 and 2023, and doctors aged 60 to 69 by 25 percent.

Growth has been fastest among younger and older doctors. Between 2019 and 2023 the number of licensed doctors in their thirties rose by 28 percent and those in their twenties by 24 percent, reflecting larger medical school intakes and international recruitment. Doctors aged 60 to 69 and those aged 70 and over also grew by 25 percent each, possibly reflecting senior doctors staying in practice for longer.

Doctors in their forties and fifties grew more slowly, by 13 and 12 percent. Younger doctors are, however, also more likely to leave UK practice, as our report on [doctors leaving the UK](#) shows, and doctors in training report some of the highest burnout levels, covered in our report on [burnout among UK doctors](#).

ETHNICITY

Ethnic diversity of the profession

The UK medical profession is one of the most ethnically diverse professions in the country. In 2023, 147,458 licensed doctors, 47.0 percent, identified as white, while 149,385, 47.6 percent, came from ethnic minority backgrounds. Asian and Asian British doctors were the largest ethnic minority group with 100,934 doctors (32.2 percent), followed by Black and Black British doctors with 21,288 (6.8 percent), doctors from other ethnic groups with 18,599 (5.9 percent) and doctors of mixed ethnicity with 8,564 (2.7 percent).

Ethnicity was not recorded for 16,986 doctors.

Licensed doctors in the UK by ethnicity, 2023

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-demographics

A diverse profession: Ethnic minority doctors outnumbered white doctors for the first time in 2023.

The change has been rapid. Between 2017 and 2023, the number of Asian doctors rose from 63,533 to 100,934 and Black doctors from 9,739 to 21,288, more than doubling. White doctors increased from 135,916 to 147,458. In 2019 to 2023 alone, Black doctors and doctors from other ethnic groups increased by 67 percent each and Asian doctors by 41 percent, while white doctors grew by 6 percent. Much of this growth reflects recruitment of doctors who qualified abroad, especially from South Asia and Africa.

Licensed doctors in the UK by ethnicity, 2017 and 2023

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-demographics

Black doctors more than doubled: From 9,739 in 2017 to 21,288 in 2023.

SENIORITY

Ethnicity and seniority in the NHS

Diversity is lower in senior posts. According to the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard, staff from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds made up 48.7 percent of the medical workforce in NHS trusts in England in March 2024, but 41.0 percent of consultants. In non-consultant specialist grades, such as specialty doctors, the share was 64.3 percent. Gaps in progression and in how concerns are handled are a focus for both the NHS and the GMC: employers have historically referred ethnic minority doctors to the regulator at higher rates, an issue examined in our report on [GMC fitness to practise statistics](#) and in this analysis of [referral disparities for ethnic minority and overseas-trained doctors](#).

Share of Black and minority ethnic staff in the medical workforce, NHS trusts in England, 2024 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-demographics

Fewer at the top: BME doctors make up 48.7 percent of the medical workforce but 41.0 percent of consultants.

OUTLOOK

Outlook

The trends are set to continue. With women making up around 60 percent of medical students and trainees, the female share of the profession will keep rising, and the specialist register will gradually become more balanced. The ethnic make-up of the profession will depend heavily on international recruitment, which may slow as UK graduates are prioritised for training posts. Our reports on [international doctors in the UK](#), [specialty training](#) and [doctor pay](#) explore these related trends.

KEY FACTS

UK doctor demographics in numbers

Key Facts

- Women became the majority of licensed doctors in 2024, at 50.04 percent.
- In Scotland 54.8 percent of licensed doctors are women; in Wales 47.3 percent.
- Surgery remains 83 percent male, while 63 percent of obstetricians and gynaecologists are women.
- Doctors in their thirties are the largest age group, at 34.2 percent in 2023.
- Ethnic minority doctors (47.6 percent) outnumbered white doctors (47.0 percent) for the first time in 2023.
- BME doctors make up 41.0 percent of NHS consultants in England, against 48.7 percent of the medical workforce.



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are there more female than male doctors in the UK?

Yes. In 2024, for the first time, women made up the majority of licensed doctors: 164,440 women against 164,195 men, or 50.04 percent.

What percentage of UK surgeons are women?

17 percent of licensed doctors in surgery were women in 2024, up from 9 percent in 2012, according to the GMC.

Which specialty has the most female doctors?

Obstetrics and gynaecology, where 63 percent of licensed doctors were women in 2024, followed by paediatrics at 61 percent and public health at 59 percent.

What is the ethnicity of UK doctors?

In 2023, 47.0 percent of licensed doctors were white, 32.2 percent Asian or Asian British, 6.8 percent Black or Black British, 2.7 percent mixed and 5.9 percent from other groups. Ethnicity was not recorded for 5.4 percent.

Are most UK doctors from ethnic minorities?

In 2023 ethnic minority doctors (47.6 percent) outnumbered white doctors (47.0 percent) for the first time, according to the GMC.

How old are UK doctors?

The largest age group is 30 to 39, with 34.2 percent of licensed doctors in 2023. About 8.5 percent are aged 60 or over.

Are more women becoming GPs?

Yes. 58 percent of doctors on the GP register were women in 2024, up from 48 percent of GPs in 2012, and 60 percent of GP trainees in 2023 were women.

Are ethnic minority doctors underrepresented as consultants?

Partly. BME doctors made up 48.7 percent of the medical workforce in NHS trusts in England in 2024, but 41.0 percent of consultants.



SOURCES

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[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2025 data annexe.

[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2024.

[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2022.

[General Medical Council](#) - Annual report and accounts 2025.

[NHS England](#) - Workforce Race Equality Standard 2024 data analysis report.



STATISTICS REPORT

International medical graduates in the United Kingdom statistics & facts

The NHS runs on international talent. 42 percent of licensed doctors in the UK qualified abroad, and two-thirds of new doctors now come from overseas, mostly from India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Egypt. But more are leaving too. This report sets out the numbers.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

42% QUALIFIED ABROAD	138,405 LICENSED IMGs AND EEA	18,630 IMG FIRST LICENCES 2024
36.3% NON-BRITISH NHS DOCTORS	12,820 INDIAN NHS DOCTORS	4,880 LEFT IN 2024

OVERVIEW

International doctors in the UK at a glance

The NHS has always relied on doctors trained abroad, but never as much as today. In 2024, 138,405 licensed doctors in the UK had obtained their primary medical qualification outside the UK, 42 percent of all licensed doctors, according to the General Medical Council (GMC). In 2017 the share was 33 percent. International medical graduates now make up the majority of new doctors: in 2024, 20,060 doctors who qualified abroad joined the UK workforce, two-thirds of all those taking up a licence and 9,676 more than UK graduates. At the same time, more of them are leaving, and the GMC has warned that the NHS can no longer assume they will stay. This report sets out where international doctors come from, where they work and how their numbers are changing. Our overview of [doctors in the United Kingdom](#) covers the workforce as a whole.

The GMC classifies doctors by where they gained their primary medical qualification (PMQ): the UK, the European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland, or the rest of the world. Doctors who qualified outside the UK and EEA are known as international medical graduates (IMGs). They usually join the register by passing the Professional and Linguistic Assessments Board (PLAB) test, through sponsorship by an approved body,

or through a recognised postgraduate qualification. PMQ is different from nationality: many British citizens qualify abroad, and many doctors who qualified in the UK are foreign nationals.

138,405**Licensed doctors qualified abroad**

2024, 42% of the total.

20,060**Joined from abroad in 2024**

66% of new licence holders.

36.3%**NHS England hospital doctors not British**

By nationality, June 2025.

4,880**International doctors who left**

2024, up 26% in a year.

SHARE

A growing share of the workforce

The share of licensed doctors who qualified outside the UK has risen every year. In 2017, 80,008 of 242,642 licensed doctors had qualified abroad, 33 percent. By 2022 the figure was 114,613, or 38.7 percent, and in 2023 it reached 128,418, or 41 percent. In 2024, 138,405 doctors, 42 percent, held a non-UK primary qualification. Over the same period the number of UK-qualified doctors grew more slowly, from 162,634 in 2017 to about 189,700 in 2024.

Share of UK licensed doctors who qualified abroad, 2017 to 2024 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

From a third to more than two-fifths: The share of doctors trained abroad rose from 33 percent in 2017 to 42 percent in 2024.

The growth is driven entirely by doctors from outside Europe. Between 2017 and 2022, the number of IMGs rose from 58,222 to 90,095, an increase of 55 percent, while doctors who qualified in the EEA increased only from 21,786 to 24,518. As a result, IMGs made up 30.4 percent of licensed doctors in 2022, compared with 24.0 percent in 2017, while the EEA share fell slightly from 9.0 to 8.3 percent. Between 2019 and 2023, the number of licensed doctors who qualified abroad grew by 41 percent, against 9 percent for UK graduates.

Licensed doctors in the UK by place of qualification, 2017 to 2022

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

IMGs up 55 percent: International medical graduates grew from 58,222 to 90,095 in five years.

JOINERS

International doctors now dominate new joiners

Since 2019 more international graduates than UK graduates have joined the medical workforce each year. Counting doctors who take up a licence for the first time, the GMC recorded 3,840 IMGs and 7,024 UK graduates in 2017. By 2019 the IMG figure had risen to 8,018, overtaking UK graduates for the first time. In 2023, 17,912 IMGs took up a licence, more than double the 8,265 UK graduates, and in 2024 the figures were 18,630 and 9,237. EEA routes are not shown in the chart, because that series changes sharply after 2021 following Brexit and is not comparable over time.

Doctors taking up a UK licence for the first time by place of qualification, 2017 to 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

Two IMGs for every UK graduate: In 2024, 18,630 international graduates took up a licence, against 9,237 UK graduates.

A small number of countries account for most international joiners. In 2021, the largest numbers of new joiners from outside the UK had qualified in India (1,820), Pakistan (1,741), Egypt (1,312), Nigeria (1,248) and Sudan (542). In 2022, India (2,402) and Pakistan (2,372) each accounted for 16 percent of non-UK joiners, and Nigeria for 1,616, up from just 181 in 2014. By 2023, more than half of all non-UK joiners, 52 percent, had qualified in India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Egypt or Bangladesh. The fastest-growing source in 2023 was Bulgaria, with 622 joiners, of whom 435 were British nationals who had studied medicine there.

New joiners to the UK register by country of primary medical qualification, 2021

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

South Asia and Africa lead: India and Pakistan each supplied more than 1,700 new joiners in 2021.

NATIONALITY

Nationality of NHS hospital doctors

Nationality data from NHS England give a complementary view. In June 2025, 36.3 percent of the 158,471 doctors working in NHS hospital and community health services in England were not British. After British doctors (99,806), the largest groups were Indian (12,820), Pakistani (6,925), Egyptian (4,600) and Nigerian (3,512). Irish, Malaysian, Sri Lankan, Greek, Sudanese, Bangladeshi and Italian nationals each numbered more than 1,200.

Non-British doctors in NHS hospitals in England by nationality, June 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

India leads: 12,820 Indian nationals worked as doctors in NHS hospitals in England.

The make-up has shifted from Europe to Asia and Africa. In September 2010, 70.6 percent of hospital doctors with a known nationality were British, 17.6 percent Asian, 7.0 percent from the EU and 3.4 percent African. After the EU referendum, the British share peaked at 74.1 percent in June 2016 and the EU share at 9.7 percent. By June 2025, the British share had fallen to 63.7 percent, while Asian nationals made up 19.9 percent and African nationals 7.7 percent, more than double their 2016 share. The EU share fell to 7.2 percent.

NHS hospital doctors in England by region of nationality, 2010 to 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

Africa nearly tripled: African nationals rose from 2.7 percent of hospital doctors in 2016 to 7.7 percent in 2025.

LEAVING

More international doctors are leaving

International doctors are also leaving in greater numbers. Among doctors who qualified outside the UK and had worked for a UK employer, 3,824 left in 2021, 3,968 in 2022 and 3,869 in 2023, before a jump of 26 percent to 4,880 in 2024. Their leaver rate, at 4.3 percent in 2024, is consistently higher than that of UK

graduates, at 3.2 percent. In a GMC news release in June 2026, the regulator warned that the NHS can no longer assume that much-needed international doctors will stay. Our report on [doctors leaving the UK](#) looks at reasons and destinations.

Internationally qualified doctors leaving UK practice, 2021 to 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

Up 26 percent in a year: 4,880 internationally qualified doctors left UK practice in 2024.

FAIRNESS

Treatment and opportunity

International doctors face specific challenges, from adapting to a new health system to finding training posts. One long-standing concern is that employers refer doctors who qualified abroad to the GMC more often. In the five years to 2020, employers referred 0.70 percent of doctors with a non-UK qualification, compared with 0.28 percent of UK graduates. The gap has narrowed considerably: for 2020 to 2024 the rates were 0.28 percent and 0.15 percent. The background is explained in detail in this analysis of [why ethnic minority and overseas-trained doctors are referred to the GMC more often](#), and the full regulatory data in our report on [GMC fitness to practise statistics](#).

Employer referral rates to the GMC by place of qualification, five-year periods (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/international-doctors-uk

Gap narrowing: The referral rate for doctors qualified abroad fell from 0.70 percent to 0.28 percent.

Access to training is the other major issue. In 2024, 22,027 of 79,171 doctors in UK training posts had qualified abroad. From 2026, the Medical Training (Prioritisation) Act gives UK graduates and doctors with substantial NHS experience priority for foundation and specialty training, and in 2026 the share of accepted specialty training offers going to non-prioritised applicants fell from 27.95 percent to 1.75 percent. Details are in our report on [specialty training in the UK](#). Many international doctors also work in non-training roles: the number of locally employed doctors in England and Wales rose from 11,892 in 2014 to 38,394 in 2024, a group that includes many IMGs and that reported the sharpest fall in job satisfaction in 2025, as our report on [burnout among UK doctors](#) shows.



OUTLOOK

Outlook

International recruitment has allowed the UK medical workforce to grow by more than a third since 2017, but it has also made the NHS dependent on doctors who have choices elsewhere. Rising departures, tighter access to training and global competition from countries such as Australia mean that the share of new doctors from abroad may fall in the coming years. Our reports on [the demographics of UK doctors](#), [doctor pay](#) and [GPs](#) explore related trends.

KEY FACTS

International doctors in numbers

Key Facts

- 138,405 licensed doctors, 42 percent, qualified outside the UK in 2024, up from 33 percent in 2017.
- International medical graduates grew from 58,222 in 2017 to 90,095 in 2022.
- In 2024, 18,630 IMGs took up a UK licence for the first time, double the 9,237 UK graduates.
- India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Egypt and Bangladesh supplied 52 percent of non-UK joiners in 2023.
- 36.3 percent of NHS hospital doctors in England were not British in June 2025.
- 4,880 internationally qualified doctors left UK practice in 2024, up 26 percent.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many doctors in the UK trained abroad?

In 2024, 138,405 licensed doctors, 42 percent of the total, had obtained their primary medical qualification outside the UK, according to the GMC.

What is an international medical graduate?

An international medical graduate (IMG) is a doctor whose primary medical qualification is from outside the UK, the EEA and Switzerland. IMGs usually join the UK register through the PLAB test, sponsorship or a recognised postgraduate qualification.

Where do most international doctors in the UK come from?

India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Egypt and Bangladesh. These five countries accounted for 52 percent of non-UK joiners in 2023.

How many new UK doctors are international graduates?

In 2024, 18,630 international medical graduates took up a UK licence for the first time, compared with 9,237 UK graduates. Including EEA routes, 66 percent of new licence holders qualified abroad.

What share of NHS doctors are not British?

In June 2025, 36.3 percent of doctors in NHS hospital and community health services in England were not British. Indian nationals were the largest group with 12,820 doctors.

Are international doctors leaving the UK?

Yes. 4,880 internationally qualified doctors who had worked in the UK left in 2024, up 26 percent on 2023. Their leaver rate was 4.3 percent against 3.2 percent for UK graduates.

Are international doctors referred to the GMC more often?

Historically yes. In 2016 to 2020, employers referred 0.70 percent of doctors qualified abroad against 0.28 percent of UK graduates. By 2020 to 2024 the rates had narrowed to 0.28 and 0.15 percent.

Does the UK still recruit doctors from abroad for training?

Fewer. Since the 2026 Medical Training Prioritisation Act, UK graduates and doctors with NHS experience have priority, and non-prioritised applicants received 1.75 percent of accepted specialty training offers in 2026.

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[NHS England](#) - Impact of the Medical Training Prioritisation Act, June 2026.

STATISTICS REPORT

Burnout and job satisfaction among UK doctors statistics & facts

A profession under strain. One in five UK doctors is at high risk of burnout, only just over half are satisfied with their work, and a record share plan to leave. This report brings together GMC, NHS and international survey data on how doctors are coping.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/uk-doctors-burnout-statistics

20% HIGH BURNOUT RISK	55% SATISFIED WITH WORK	24% STRESS-RELATED LEAVE
36% UNABLE TO COPE WEEKLY	39% SAW CARE COMPROMISED	22% LIKELY TO LEAVE UK

OVERVIEW

Burnout and job satisfaction among UK doctors

One in five doctors in the UK is at high risk of burnout. In the General Medical Council (GMC) Barometer survey of 2025, 20 percent of doctors met the threshold for a high risk of burnout, double the 10 percent recorded in 2020. Only 55 percent said they were at least somewhat satisfied with their day-to-day work, far below the 75 percent of 2020. Nearly a quarter, 24 percent, had taken a leave of absence because of stress in the previous year, and 39 percent had witnessed patient safety or care being compromised. This report brings together the most important survey data on the working lives of UK doctors. Our overview of [doctors in the United Kingdom](#) puts these figures in the context of the wider workforce.

The GMC measures burnout using questions based on the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory. A doctor is classed as being at high risk if they score highly on six or seven of the seven measures, which ask how often work leaves them exhausted, frustrated or worn out. Because the method is the same every year, the results can be compared over time. Other surveys, such as the NHS Staff Survey, use a single question about feeling burnt out and give different percentages, so they should not be combined in one series.



20%

High risk of burnout

All doctors, GMC 2025.

55%

Satisfied with day-to-day work

2025, down from 75% in 2020.

24%

Took stress-related leave

In the previous year, 2025.

22%

Likely to leave UK practice

In the next 12 months, 2025.

TREND

Satisfaction and burnout since 2019

The pandemic years created an unusual pattern. In 2020, a year when much routine work was paused, satisfaction rose to 75 percent and burnout risk fell to 10 percent. Both measures then deteriorated sharply. Satisfaction fell to 70 percent in 2021 and to a low of 50 percent in 2022, while the share at high risk of burnout peaked at 25 percent. Since then there has been a partial recovery: satisfaction was 53 percent in 2023, 59 percent in 2024 and 55 percent in 2025, and burnout risk was 21, 18 and 20 percent. Neither measure has returned to pre-pandemic levels, when 63 percent were satisfied and 16 percent were at high risk.

Satisfaction and high burnout risk among UK doctors, 2019 to 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-burnout-statistics

No full recovery: Satisfaction fell from 75 percent in 2020 to 55 percent in 2025, and burnout risk doubled.

The share of doctors who took leave because of stress has risen every year since 2019, from 12 percent to 14 percent in 2020, 17 percent in 2021, 22 percent in 2022, 23 percent in 2023 and 2024 and 24 percent in 2025. In 2025 the figure was highest for locally employed doctors at 37 percent and doctors in training at 30 percent, compared with 20 percent of GPs and 15 percent of specialists.

DOCTOR GROUPS

Which doctors are most affected

Experiences differ widely between types of doctor. Specialists have become more satisfied, rising from 53 percent in 2023 to 65 percent in 2025. Doctors in training improved slightly from 54 to 58 percent. Locally employed doctors, who are often on short contracts outside formal training, moved the other way: their satisfaction fell from 63 percent in 2024 to 54 percent in 2025, the sharpest drop of any group, and 25 percent were at high risk of burnout. GPs remain the most dissatisfied group, with 47 percent dissatisfied in 2025.

Doctors satisfied with day-to-day work by type of doctor, 2023 and 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-burnout-statistics

Diverging fortunes: Specialists became more satisfied, while locally employed doctors lost ground.

Pressure on general practice stands out in almost every measure. In 2025, 43 percent of GPs were classed as struggling, meaning they worked beyond their rostered hours and felt unable to cope with their workload at least once a week, compared with 30 percent of all doctors. Sixty percent of GPs said they found it difficult to provide sufficient patient care at least weekly, against 41 percent overall. Our report on the [GP workforce](#) looks at the numbers behind this pressure.

TRAINEES

Doctors in training: the National Training Survey

The GMC National Training Survey, which every doctor in training is invited to complete, uses the same burnout questions. In 2025, 20 percent of trainees were at high risk of burnout and 41 percent at moderate risk, so 61 percent were at high or moderate risk. The GMC describes the high-risk figure as double pre-pandemic levels, when it stood at 10 percent. In the 2026 survey, published in July 2026, the high-risk share eased slightly to 19 percent, while the combined high or moderate share stayed at 61 percent.

Trainee doctors at high risk of burnout by specialty, 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-burnout-statistics



Emergency medicine hardest hit: Almost a third of emergency medicine trainees were at high risk of burnout.

Specialty matters a great deal. Emergency medicine trainees were the most affected, with 30 percent at high risk of burnout in 2025, followed by obstetrics and gynaecology at 23 percent and surgery and medicine at 22 percent each. In public health only 4 percent were at high risk. Work intensity tells a similar story: 70 percent of emergency medicine trainees and 63 percent in obstetrics and gynaecology described their daytime workload as heavy or very heavy, against 42 percent of all trainees. Competition for training posts, covered in our report on [specialty training in the UK](#), adds another source of stress.

WORKLOAD

Workload, hours and the ability to cope

Heavy workload is the most common pressure. In 2025, 61 percent of doctors worked beyond their rostered hours at least once a week, down from 70 percent in 2022 but still close to the 68 percent of 2019. The share who felt unable to cope with their workload at least weekly was 36 percent, up from 33 percent in 2024 and well above the 28 percent of 2019. Among GPs the figures were higher: in 2024, 80 percent of GPs worked beyond rostered hours weekly and 47 percent felt unable to cope.

Workload pressures among UK doctors, 2019 to 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-burnout-statistics

Still above 2019: More than a third of doctors felt unable to cope with their workload every week in 2025.

Doctors are responding by protecting themselves. In 2025, 62 percent had made some adjustment because of workload, 38 percent had refused extra work and 19 percent had reduced their contracted hours. Sixty-one percent said it was difficult to take breaks at least once a week. In the NHS Staff Survey 2025 for England, 41.1 percent of medical and dental staff reported feeling unwell because of work-related stress in the previous year, slightly down from 42.2 percent in 2024.

REASONS

Why doctors are dissatisfied

When dissatisfied doctors were asked why, workload was the leading reason. In 2025, 32 percent of dissatisfied doctors cited high workload or long hours, 19 percent a lack of support and 18 percent each cited compromised or unsafe care, staff shortages, patient expectations and a lack of career progression. Poor pay was named by 15 percent, as were inefficient systems and feeling undervalued. In 2024 pay had been cited by 20 percent, which may reflect the pay awards since then.

Main reasons for dissatisfaction among UK doctors, 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-burnout-statistics

Workload first: One in three dissatisfied doctors named high workload or long hours.

PATIENT SAFETY

When pressure affects patient care

Pressure on doctors has consequences for patients. In 2025, 39 percent of doctors said they had witnessed patient safety or care being compromised in the previous year, compared with 32 percent in 2019 and a peak of 42 percent in 2022. The figure was highest in Wales at 53 percent. Asked what contributed, 63 percent pointed to workload pressure, 62 percent to inadequate staffing, 57 percent to delays to care and 40 percent to fatigue. Confidence in raising concerns about patient care fell from 64 percent to 61 percent.

Factors behind compromised patient care, 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/uk-doctors-burnout-statistics

Staffing and workload: Six in ten doctors linked compromised care to workload and staffing.

The link between pressure and professional standards is not only a patient safety issue. Burnout, stress and ill health can also bring doctors into contact with the regulator. When a health condition affects practice, the GMC has a separate health route within fitness to practise, explained in this guide on [health and fitness to practise](#). The regulator data on complaints and sanctions is covered in our report on [GMC](#)

[fitness to practise statistics](#).

SUPPORT

Autonomy, teamwork and support

There are some positive signals. In 2025, 63 percent of doctors said they had enough autonomy in their work, including 71 percent of GPs, and 71 percent felt part of a supportive team. Doctors receive most support from immediate colleagues: 82 percent said they felt supported by them, compared with 59 percent by senior medical staff and only 38 percent by non-clinical management, down from 42 percent in 2024. Just 35 percent felt they could influence change at work, and 36 percent believed they could progress their career as they wanted.

MEASURE (2025)	ALL DOCTORS	GPs	DOCTORS IN TRAINING	LOCALLY EMPLOYED
Enough autonomy	63%	71%	57%	54%
Part of a supportive team	71%	77%	74%	70%
Struggling with workload weekly	30%	43%	33%	28%
Took leave due to stress	24%	20%	30%	37%

LEAVING

From burnout to leaving

Burnout feeds directly into decisions to leave. In 2025, 22 percent of doctors said they were likely to leave UK practice in the next 12 months, excluding retirement, and 15 percent planned to move abroad, which for the first time was the single most common planned change. Among doctors thinking of leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement, 72 percent said their current role was harming their wellbeing. Of those planning to move abroad, 77 percent said doctors are treated better elsewhere and 65 percent cited higher pay. The numbers who actually leave are set out in our report on [doctors leaving the UK](#), and pay in our report on [UK doctor pay](#).

**INTERNATIONAL**

How UK doctors compare internationally

International surveys suggest UK family doctors are under particular strain. In the Commonwealth Fund 2022 survey of primary care physicians in ten high-income countries, 71 percent of UK GPs described their job as extremely or very stressful, the highest share of all ten countries alongside Germany, according to an analysis by the Health Foundation. Only 24 percent of UK GPs were extremely or very satisfied with practising medicine, the lowest level alongside France. In the 2025 round, burned-out UK GPs were the most likely of any country to be dissatisfied with their income and workload. A global view of mental health is available in our report on [mental health worldwide](#).

OUTLOOK

Outlook

The data point to a profession that has stabilised since the low point of 2022 but has not recovered. Satisfaction among specialists is improving, yet locally employed doctors, trainees and GPs remain under heavy pressure, and intentions to leave are at record levels. The next GMC Barometer, due in 2027, will show whether the 2026 resident doctor pay deal and changes to training places make a difference. The make-up of the workforce, including the growing role of [international medical graduates](#), is covered in our related reports.

KEY FACTS

Doctor wellbeing in numbers

Key Facts

- 20 percent of UK doctors were at high risk of burnout in 2025, double the 10 percent of 2020.
- 55 percent were satisfied with their day-to-day work, down from 75 percent in 2020.
- 24 percent took a leave of absence because of stress in the previous year.
- 30 percent of emergency medicine trainees were at high risk of burnout.
- 39 percent witnessed patient safety or care being compromised.



- 22 percent were likely to leave UK practice within a year, excluding retirement.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many UK doctors are burnt out?

In the GMC Barometer survey 2025, 20 percent of doctors were at high risk of burnout. In 2020 the figure was 10 percent, and it peaked at 25 percent in 2022.

How satisfied are UK doctors with their jobs?

55 percent of doctors were at least somewhat satisfied with their day-to-day work in 2025, compared with 59 percent in 2024 and 75 percent in 2020.

Which doctors have the highest burnout risk?

Locally employed doctors (25 percent) and doctors in training (24 percent) had the highest risk in 2025. Among trainees, emergency medicine was highest at 30 percent.

Why are UK doctors dissatisfied?

The most common reason in 2025 was high workload or long hours, cited by 32 percent of dissatisfied doctors, followed by a lack of support at 19 percent.

How many doctors work beyond their rostered hours?

61 percent of doctors worked beyond their rostered hours at least once a week in 2025. In 2024, 80 percent of GPs did so.

Does burnout affect patient safety?

39 percent of doctors witnessed patient safety or care being compromised in 2025. Most linked it to workload pressure (63 percent) and inadequate staffing (62 percent).

How many doctors plan to leave the UK?

22 percent of doctors said they were likely to leave UK practice in the next 12 months in 2025, excluding retirement, and 15 percent planned to move abroad.



How do UK GPs compare internationally?

In the Commonwealth Fund 2022 survey, 71 percent of UK GPs found their job extremely or very stressful, the highest of ten countries alongside Germany.

SOURCES

[General Medical Council](#) - SoMEP Barometer survey 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - Workplace experiences 2026.

[General Medical Council](#) - Barometer survey 2024.

[General Medical Council](#) - Barometer survey 2023.

[General Medical Council](#) - National Training Survey 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - National Training Survey 2026.

[NHS Staff Survey](#) - National results briefing 2025.

[The Health Foundation](#) - Stressed and overworked, 2023.

[The Commonwealth Fund](#) - Burnout among primary care physicians in 10 countries, 2025.



STATISTICS REPORT

Doctors leaving UK practice statistics & facts

More doctors are heading for the exit. In 2024, 16,124 doctors gave up their licence to practise in the UK, and a record share say they may follow. Younger UK graduates and experienced international doctors are leaving in greater numbers. This report shows who goes, why and where.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

16,124 LEAVERS 2024	5,793 UK GRADUATES LEFT	4,880 INTERNATIONAL LEFT
3.6% LEAVER RATE	23% TO AUSTRALIA	22% LIKELY TO LEAVE

OVERVIEW

How many doctors leave UK practice

More doctors are giving up their licence to practise in the UK than ever before. According to the General Medical Council (GMC), 16,124 doctors stopped holding a licence in 2024, up from 11,309 in 2023 and 9,667 in 2019. Leavers who had been working in the UK health service included 5,793 UK graduates and 4,880 doctors who qualified abroad, the latter up 26 percent in a single year. At the same time, a record 22 percent of doctors told the GMC in 2025 that they were likely to leave UK practice within a year, and moving abroad became the most commonly planned change. This report sets out who is leaving, why and where they go. For the overall size of the profession, see our overview of [doctors in the United Kingdom](#).

Leaving the register does not always mean leaving medicine. Some doctors retire, some move abroad to practise, some take a career break and some give up their licence while keeping their registration. The GMC asks doctors why they relinquish their licence, which allows the reasons to be tracked over time. Because the number of doctors joining is also at a record level, the workforce is still growing overall. The concern is about who leaves: increasingly younger UK graduates early in their careers and experienced international doctors on whom the NHS depends.



16,124

Doctors who gave up a licence, 2024

Up from 9,667 in 2019.

4,880

International doctors leaving

Previously working in the UK, up 26%.

23%

Leavers heading to Australia

Among 2023 leavers naming a country.

22%

Likely to leave in 12 months

GMC survey, 2025, excluding retirement.

TREND

Leavers since 2019

The number of doctors no longer holding a licence fell to 6,894 in 2020, when many doctors stayed in post during the pandemic and some were granted temporary registration. It then rose to 9,825 in 2021, 11,319 in 2022 and 11,309 in 2023, before jumping to 16,124 in 2024. The GMC notes that part of the 2024 increase among internationally qualified doctors who had never worked in the UK health service reflects an administrative backlog being cleared, so the underlying rise is smaller than the headline suggests.

Doctors who stopped holding a licence to practise in the UK, 2019 to 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

A sharp rise in 2024: 16,124 doctors gave up their licence, two-thirds more than in 2019.

The more meaningful comparison is between doctors who had actually been working in the UK. Among doctors previously connected to a UK employer, 5,793 UK graduates and 4,880 international graduates left in 2024. The UK figure was the highest of the period, up from 4,615 in 2019, while the international figure rose sharply from 3,869 in 2023. Among international doctors who had never worked in the UK, leavers rose from 798 in 2019 to 5,193 in 2024, the group most affected by the administrative backlog.

Doctors leaving UK practice by place of qualification, 2019 to 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

Both groups rising: UK graduate leavers reached 5,793 in 2024 and international leavers 4,880.

RATES

Leaver rates: who is most likely to go

Because the workforce has grown, rates tell a clearer story than raw numbers. Among doctors connected to a UK employer, 3.6 percent left in 2024, compared with 3.2 percent in 2023 and 3.5 percent in 2019. The leaver rate for international graduates is consistently higher than for UK graduates: 4.3 percent against 3.2 percent in 2024. International doctors have always been more mobile, as many return home or move on to other countries after gaining UK experience, but the GMC has warned that the NHS can no longer assume they will stay.

Leaver rates of UK and internationally qualified doctors, 2019 to 2024 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

International doctors more mobile: 4.3 percent of internationally qualified doctors left in 2024, against 3.2 percent of UK graduates.

The age of UK leavers is falling. According to the GMC, the number of UK graduates under 40 who left rose from 2,245 in 2023 to 2,627 in 2024, an increase of 17 percent, and leavers aged 20 to 29 rose from 1,350 to 1,604. The median age of UK-qualified leavers fell from 51 to 46. In other words, more doctors are leaving early in their careers rather than at retirement. Our report on [specialty training in the UK](#) shows the competition for training posts that many of these young doctors face.

MEASURE	2023	2024
UK graduate leavers under 40	2,245	2,627
UK graduate leavers aged 20 to 29	1,350	1,604
Median age of UK-qualified leavers	51	46
International leavers previously working in the UK	3,869	4,880
Leaver rate, all connected doctors	3.2%	3.6%



REASONS

Why doctors leave

Moving abroad to practise is the most common reason doctors give for relinquishing their licence. Among doctors who left in 2023 and gave a reason, 28 percent said they were going to practise abroad, up from 25 percent in 2022, and a further 9 percent said they were going to live abroad. Retirement accounted for 21 percent, down from 24 percent. Twelve percent gave no reason. So more than a third of leavers in 2023 were heading overseas.

Reasons doctors gave for giving up their UK licence, 2023 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

Abroad beats retirement: 37 percent of 2023 leavers were going to practise or live abroad, against 21 percent retiring.

A GMC study of more than 1,100 doctors who left between 2018 and 2022 explored the deeper reasons. The most common was a better quality of life abroad, cited by 62 percent. Half said they felt undervalued in the UK, 49 percent wanted higher pay, 38 percent wanted more time outside work and 35 percent cited a lack of career development. A third were returning to their home country. Pay and conditions are covered in detail in our report on [UK doctor pay](#), and workplace pressures in our report on [burnout among UK doctors](#).

Reasons for leaving among doctors who left UK practice, 2018 to 2022 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

Quality of life first: Six in ten leavers said life abroad was better, half felt undervalued in the UK.

DESTINATIONS

Where departing doctors go

Australia is by far the most popular destination. Among doctors who left in 2023 and named a destination, 23 percent were going to Australia, up from 21 percent in 2022, 8 percent to New Zealand and 6 percent to Ireland. British nationals made up 69 percent of those heading to Australia and 83 percent of those going to

New Zealand. Many are young: 64 percent of the 797 British doctors heading for Australia had completed their second foundation year within the previous three years.

Intended destinations of doctors leaving UK practice, 2023 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

Australia leads: Almost a quarter of departing doctors who named a country were heading to Australia.

Australia is actively recruiting UK doctors. Its Expedited Specialist pathway, opened in October 2024, allows specialists from comparable systems to register faster. By the end of July 2025, 229 doctors had been registered through the pathway, and the Medical Board of Australia reported that 87 percent of applicants had qualified in the United Kingdom. In New Zealand, registrations through the route for UK and Irish graduates grew by 26.9 percent in 2023/24, although the Medical Council of New Zealand reports that only about 60 percent of UK doctors are still there after one year and 37 percent after two.

INTENTIONS

How many more may leave

Survey data suggest the outflow could grow. In the GMC Barometer survey, the share of doctors who said they were likely to leave UK practice in the next 12 months rose from 11 percent in 2021 to 18 percent in 2022, 20 percent in 2023, 19 percent in 2024 and 22 percent in 2025. The share planning to move abroad rose from 10 percent in 2022 to 15 percent in 2025, when it became the most commonly planned career change for the first time. Of those likely to move abroad, 35 percent did not intend to return and 38 percent did not know.

Doctors likely to leave UK practice or move abroad in the next year, 2021 to 2025 (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

Rising intentions: 22 percent of doctors were likely to leave UK practice in 2025, double the 2021 level.

Intentions do not always turn into action. The GMC followed up doctors who said in 2023 that they were likely to leave: 7.7 percent had given up their licence within 12 months and 11.6 percent within 18 months. Even so, with more than 300,000 licensed doctors, a small conversion rate means thousands of departures each year.



BALANCE

Joiners and leavers: is the workforce shrinking?

Despite the rise in leavers, the UK medical workforce is still growing because joiners outnumber leavers by a wide margin. In 2024, 30,444 doctors joined the UK medical workforce, compared with 16,124 who stopped holding a licence. The number of licensed doctors rose to 328,149. The challenge is dependence: in 2024, two-thirds of doctors taking up a licence for the first time had qualified abroad, so a rise in international departures would hit the NHS hard. Our report on [international doctors in the UK](#) looks at this dependence in detail.

Doctors joining and leaving the UK workforce, 2019 to 2024

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/doctors-leaving-uk

Still a net gain: In 2024, 30,444 doctors joined and 16,124 gave up their licence.

OUTLOOK

Outlook

Several developments will shape the outflow in the coming years. The 2026 pay deal for resident doctors and the new law prioritising UK graduates for training posts may persuade more young UK doctors to stay, but the same prioritisation could encourage international graduates to look elsewhere. Australia and New Zealand continue to recruit actively. The GMC Workforce report for 2026, expected in late 2026, will show whether the 2024 spike was a one-off. The wider picture of the workforce, including [GPs](#) and [the demographics of UK doctors](#), is covered in our related reports, and regulatory data in our report on [GMC fitness to practise](#).

KEY FACTS

Doctors leaving the UK in numbers

Key Facts

- 16,124 doctors stopped holding a UK licence in 2024, up from 9,667 in 2019.

- 4,880 internationally qualified doctors who had worked in the UK left in 2024, up 26 percent.
- UK graduate leavers under 40 rose 17 percent to 2,627; their median age fell from 51 to 46.
- 28 percent of 2023 leavers went to practise abroad and 21 percent retired.
- 23 percent of leavers naming a destination chose Australia.
- 22 percent of doctors said in 2025 they were likely to leave UK practice within a year.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many doctors leave the UK each year?

16,124 doctors stopped holding a licence to practise in the UK in 2024, up from 11,309 in 2023. Not all of them leave the country; some retire or take a break.

Are more UK doctors moving abroad?

Yes. In 2023, 28 percent of doctors who gave up their licence said they were going to practise abroad, up from 25 percent in 2022, and 9 percent were going to live abroad.

Where do UK doctors go when they leave?

Australia is the most popular destination: 23 percent of 2023 leavers who named a country were going there, followed by New Zealand (8 percent) and Ireland (6 percent).

Why do doctors leave the NHS?

In a GMC study, 62 percent of doctors who left cited a better quality of life abroad, 51 percent felt undervalued and 49 percent wanted higher pay.

Are international doctors leaving the UK?

Yes. 4,880 internationally qualified doctors who had worked in the UK left in 2024, up 26 percent on 2023. Their leaver rate was 4.3 percent.



How many doctors plan to leave the UK?

In the GMC Barometer survey 2025, 22 percent of doctors said they were likely to leave UK practice in the next 12 months, excluding retirement, and 15 percent planned to move abroad.

Is the number of UK doctors falling?

No. Joiners still outnumber leavers. In 2024, 30,444 doctors joined the UK medical workforce and the number of licensed doctors reached 328,149.

Are younger doctors leaving?

Yes. The number of UK graduates under 40 who left rose 17 percent to 2,627 in 2024, and the median age of UK-qualified leavers fell from 51 to 46.

SOURCES

[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2025 data annexe.

[General Medical Council](#) - Workforce report 2024.

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[General Medical Council](#) - Identifying groups of migrating doctors.

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[Medical Board of Australia](#) - Workforce initiatives produce results, August 2025.

[Medical Council of New Zealand](#) - Workforce Survey Report 2025.



STATISTICS REPORT

GMC fitness to practise statistics & facts

Record concerns, few sanctions. The General Medical Council received 13,465 concerns about doctors in 2025, more than ever before. Most were closed quickly, 184 reached a tribunal and 48 doctors were erased. This report follows the numbers from complaint to sanction.

Updated Oct 14, 2026 · businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

13,465 CONCERNS 2025	80% FROM THE PUBLIC	997 INVESTIGATIONS
184 TRIBUNAL REFERRALS	48 ERASURES	284 INTERIM ORDERS

OVERVIEW

GMC fitness to practise at a glance

The General Medical Council (GMC) received 13,465 concerns about doctors in 2025, the highest number on record. That was 25 percent more than in 2024 and 60 percent more than in 2020. Yet the vast majority of concerns never reach a hearing. In 2025, 11,679 were closed at the first triage stage, 997 led to a full investigation, 184 were referred to a tribunal and 48 doctors were erased from the medical register. Concerns related to about 3 percent of all registered doctors, or 33 concerns for every 1,000 doctors on the register. This report sets out the full GMC fitness to practise data for 2019 to 2025, from the first complaint to the final sanction. For a wider picture of the profession, see our overview of [doctors in the United Kingdom](#).

Fitness to practise is the process the GMC uses to decide whether a doctor is safe to keep working without restrictions. A doctor can be found impaired because of misconduct, deficient professional performance, a criminal conviction, adverse physical or mental health, or a determination by another regulator. Cases that may require action on registration are decided by independent tribunals run by the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (MPTS), which is part of the GMC but operationally separate from it.



13,465

Concerns received in 2025

Up 25% on 2024.

997

Investigations opened

After provisional enquiries, 2025.

184

Referred to tribunal

Case examiner decisions, 2025.

48

Doctors erased

MPTS outcomes, 2025.

CONCERNS

How many concerns the GMC receives

The number of concerns raised about doctors has risen sharply since the pandemic. The GMC recorded 8,654 enquiries in 2019 and 8,468 triage decisions in 2020, when pandemic restrictions reduced routine contact between patients and doctors. The total then rose to 9,074 in 2021, 8,893 in 2022, 10,031 in 2023, 10,769 in 2024 and 13,465 in 2025. Part of the growth reflects a larger register: the number of doctors on the register rose from 311,356 in 2019 to 410,566 in 2025. Even so, concerns grew faster than the register over the period.

Concerns about doctors received by the GMC, 2019 to 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

A record year: Concerns rose to 13,465 in 2025, 60 percent more than in 2020.

Most concerns come from patients and members of the public. In 2025, 10,717 of the 13,465 concerns, about 80 percent, came from the public. A further 552 came from persons acting in a public capacity, mainly employers and the police, of which 190 came from employers specifically. The remaining 2,196 came from other sources, including other regulators and doctors themselves. Concerns from employers are far fewer but much more likely to lead to an investigation, because they usually follow local processes that have already identified a serious problem.

Source of concerns about doctors, 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

Patients raise most concerns: Four in five concerns came from members of the public.

TRIAGE

From complaint to investigation: the GMC funnel

Every concern first goes through triage, where GMC staff decide whether it raises a question about a doctor being fit to practise. In 2025, 11,679 concerns were closed at this first stage, for example because they related to a service complaint, fell outside the GMC remit or had already been handled locally. A further 291 were passed to the employer or responsible officer and closed, 554 went to a provisional enquiry, a short fact check that lets the GMC close cases quickly where a doctor clearly met the expected standards, and 941 went straight to investigation. After provisional enquiries, 997 cases were under full investigation, 7 percent of all concerns.

The GMC fitness to practise funnel, 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

Few concerns reach a hearing: Of 13,465 concerns in 2025, 184 were referred to a tribunal and 48 ended in erasure.

STAGE	2019	2021	2023	2024	2025
Concerns received	8,654	9,074	10,031	10,769	13,465
Closed at initial triage	6,298	7,401	8,490	9,087	11,679
Provisional enquiries	602	490	490	547	554
Investigations after provisional enquiries	1,549	1,007	814	906	997
Case examiner decisions	1,279	1,031	842	671	679
Referred to MPTS tribunal	347	257	210	169	184

Investigations themselves have become rarer relative to the caseload. In 2019, 1,549 investigations were opened from 8,654 concerns, about 18 percent. By 2025 the share had fallen to 7 percent, reflecting changes in GMC triage and the wider use of provisional enquiries. Our partner guide to the [GMC fitness to practise process](#) explains each stage from the doctor perspective, including the rights a doctor has at

every step.

CASE EXAMINERS

What case examiners decide

At the end of an investigation, two case examiners, one medical and one lay, decide what should happen. They can close the case with no action, issue advice, issue a formal warning, agree undertakings with the doctor or refer the case to a tribunal. In 2025 the case examiners made 679 decisions: 309 cases concluded with no further action, 110 doctors received a warning, 60 agreed undertakings, 16 received advice and 184 were referred to the MPTS.

Case examiner decisions on GMC investigations, 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

Most investigations end without a hearing: 495 of 679 decisions in 2025 were resolved by the case examiners themselves.

The number of case examiner decisions has roughly halved since 2019, when there were 1,279. Referrals to a tribunal fell from 347 to 184 over the same period, while warnings rose from 85 to 110. In 2023 and 2024, about a quarter of case examiner decisions resulted in a referral to a tribunal. The 2024 total excludes 30 referrals for criminal convictions, which are handled separately: 30 doctors received a custodial sentence in 2024, up from 21 in 2023.

TRIBUNALS

Tribunal hearings and sanctions

MPTS tribunals decide whether a doctor fitness to practise is impaired and, if so, what sanction is needed to protect the public. In 2025 the MPTS concluded 160 GMC tribunals. Of these, 48 ended in erasure from the register, 68 in suspension and 7 in conditions on practice. In 23 cases the tribunal found no impairment, in 11 it found no impairment but issued a warning, in 1 it found impairment but took no further action, and 2 doctors were granted voluntary erasure. A detailed walk-through of how a hearing runs, from the opening to the sanction stage, is available in this guide to the [MPTS tribunal hearing process](#).

Erasures and suspensions by MPTS tribunals, 2019 to 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

Fewer hearings, similar severity: Erasures ranged from 43 to 68 a year, while suspensions fell from 120 in 2019 to 68 in 2025.

The cases that reach a tribunal are, by their nature, the most serious. The GMC reported that more than 90 percent of the tribunal cases concluded in 2025 involved misconduct, criminal convictions or both, and tribunals made 124 findings of impairment. Erasure or suspension accounted for 68 percent of outcomes in 2023 and 77 percent in 2024. Across 2019 to 2025, tribunals erased 399 doctors in total.

Dishonesty is the most common type of case. Across the 160 hearings in 2025, the MPTS recorded 270 case types, because a single hearing can involve several. Dishonesty appeared 74 times, or 27 percent of all case types, sexual misconduct 48 times and other misconduct 41 times. Clinical concerns appeared in 36 cases, health in 24, violence in 23, substance misuse in 12 and discrimination in 7.

Types of cases heard by MPTS tribunals, 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

Dishonesty leads: More than a quarter of the issues heard by tribunals in 2025 related to dishonesty.

INTERIM ORDERS

Interim orders while cases are investigated

Where a doctor may pose a risk while a case is investigated, the GMC can ask an interim orders tribunal to restrict their practice for a fixed period. In 2025, interim orders tribunals made 350 decisions: 229 imposed conditions, 55 imposed a suspension and in 66 cases no order was made. That means 284 doctors had their practice restricted on an interim basis, up from 202 in 2023. Conditions are far more common than suspension, because they allow a doctor to keep working under supervision or with limits on what they do.

Interim orders imposed on doctors, 2019 to 2025

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

Conditions dominate: In 2025, 229 interim orders imposed conditions and 55 imposed a suspension.

FAIRNESS

Who is referred: the disparity in employer referrals

One of the most debated issues in medical regulation is that some groups of doctors are referred to the GMC by their employers more often than others. In the five years to 2020, employers referred 0.58 percent of ethnic minority doctors, compared with 0.30 percent of white doctors, and 0.70 percent of doctors who qualified outside the UK, against 0.28 percent of UK graduates. The GMC set a target to eliminate this disparity by 2026, and the gap has narrowed: for 2020 to 2024 the rates were 0.26 percent for ethnic minority doctors against 0.15 percent for white doctors. The causes and what is being done about them are examined in depth in this analysis of [why ethnic minority and overseas-trained doctors are referred more often](#).

Employer referral rates to the GMC by ethnicity, five-year periods (%)

Interactive chart online: businessstats.com/gmc-fitness-to-practise-statistics

A narrowing gap: Referral rates fell for both groups, but ethnic minority doctors are still referred more often.

The GMC statistics also show how different groups are represented at each stage. In 2025, Black doctors made up 7.3 percent of the register and 4.1 percent of triage decisions, but 13.8 percent of tribunal outcomes. White doctors made up 44.6 percent of the register, 31.3 percent of triage decisions and 35.6 percent of tribunal outcomes. Differences at the tribunal stage do not by themselves prove bias, but they are a central reason why the GMC monitors fairness across the whole process. More data on the make-up of the profession is in our report on [UK doctors by gender, age and ethnicity](#).

PERFORMANCE

How the GMC performs as a regulator

The GMC is overseen by the Professional Standards Authority (PSA), which reviews every UK health regulator each year against its Standards of Good Regulation. In its review for 2024/25, published in December 2025, the PSA found that the GMC met all 18 standards, including all five standards for fitness to



practise. The PSA noted that timeliness from start to finish had improved, although the number of older open cases had increased. The GMC states that it usually reaches a decision on whether to investigate within six months and that triage typically takes 11 weeks.

GMC fitness to practise in 2025: key numbers

- 13,465 concerns received, 80 percent of them from members of the public.
- 11,679 concerns closed at initial triage; 997 investigations after provisional enquiries.
- 679 case examiner decisions, including 110 warnings and 184 referrals to a tribunal.
- 160 tribunals concluded, with 48 erasures and 68 suspensions.
- 284 interim orders imposed, of which 229 were conditions.

SUPPORT

What the numbers mean for doctors

For an individual doctor, the statistics are both reassuring and sobering. Reassuring, because about 87 percent of concerns are closed at triage and only a small fraction of investigations end in a sanction. Sobering, because the number of concerns keeps rising and an investigation can take many months, with a real effect on wellbeing and career. Doctors facing an investigation are generally expected to show insight into what went wrong and evidence of remediation, such as targeted learning and reflection. Structured options include [GMC remediation and CPD courses for doctors](#). The pressures behind many concerns, from workload to burnout, are covered in our report on [burnout among UK doctors](#), and the long-running pay dispute in our report on [UK doctor pay](#).

OUTLOOK

Outlook

Three trends will shape fitness to practise in the coming years. First, the volume of concerns is likely to keep rising as the register grows, and the GMC has already reported a record 2025. Second, the regulation of physician associates and anaesthesia associates, which began in December 2024, brings a new group into the fitness to practise system. Third, the GMC is under pressure to close the referral gap for ethnic minority and international doctors. Medical students are not on the register, but universities run their own



student fitness to practise procedures, a step covered alongside training numbers in our report on [medical training in the UK](#). The next GMC statistical report, covering 2026, is expected in mid-2027. The wider context of the workforce, including [international medical graduates](#) and [doctors leaving the UK](#), is covered in our related reports.

KEY FACTS

GMC fitness to practise in numbers

Key Facts

- The GMC received 13,465 concerns about doctors in 2025, up 25 percent on 2024 and 60 percent on 2020.
- Concerns related to about 3 percent of registered doctors, or 33 per 1,000 doctors.
- 997 investigations were opened after provisional enquiries in 2025, 7 percent of concerns.
- Case examiners referred 184 cases to the MPTS in 2025, down from 347 in 2019.
- Tribunals erased 48 doctors and suspended 68 in 2025.
- Dishonesty was the most common issue at tribunal, at 27 percent of case types.

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How many complaints does the GMC receive?

The GMC received 13,465 concerns about doctors in 2025, the highest on record and 25 percent more than in 2024. About 80 percent came from members of the public.

How many GMC complaints lead to an investigation?

In 2025, 997 concerns led to a full investigation after provisional enquiries, about 7 percent of all concerns. Most concerns, 11,679 in 2025, were closed at initial triage.



How many doctors are struck off each year?

MPTS tribunals erased 48 doctors from the medical register in 2025. Between 2019 and 2025 the annual number ranged from 43 to 68.

What do GMC case examiners decide?

Case examiners can close a case, give advice, issue a warning, agree undertakings or refer the case to a tribunal. In 2025 they made 679 decisions, including 309 with no action, 110 warnings and 184 referrals.

What is the most common reason for a tribunal hearing?

Dishonesty. In 2025 it accounted for 74 of 270 case types heard by MPTS tribunals, followed by sexual misconduct with 48.

What is an interim order?

An interim order restricts or suspends a doctor while a case is investigated. In 2025, 229 interim orders imposed conditions and 55 imposed a suspension.

Are ethnic minority doctors referred to the GMC more often?

Yes, by employers. For 2020 to 2024, employers referred 0.26 percent of ethnic minority doctors compared with 0.15 percent of white doctors. The gap has narrowed since 2016 to 2020.

What share of doctors face a GMC complaint?

In 2025 concerns related to about 3 percent of registered doctors, or 33 concerns per 1,000 doctors on the register.

SOURCES

[General Medical Council](#) - Concerns about fitness to practise annual statistical report 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - GMC publishes fitness to practise data for doctors, July 2026.

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[General Medical Council](#) - Annual report and accounts 2025.

[General Medical Council](#) - EDI targets, progress and priorities.

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