Return to nursing - FAQs

We are the NHS. We want you back. Get the answers you need and return to nursing.

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Why should I consider returning now?

Since 2014 there has been a national campaign to recruit and return more nurses to the NHS workforce, and this was extended to AHPs and nurses in social care in 2017.

You already have the skills and experience that can make a big difference to patients, clients, carers and their families. The RtP programme will support you and enable you to renew your registration with your professional body and re-enter practice with the competence and confidence to provide high-quality care and a safe standard of practice.

Do I need to retrain?

If your registration has lapsed, you will have to complete an NMC-approved return to practice course which takes between three and 12 months to complete. There are RtP nursing programmes available across England and specific RtP general practice nursing programmes available in the East of England, London, North East, North West, South West and West Midlands regions of England.

The amount of retraining you require depends on how long you have been out of practice. The longer you have been out of practice, the more practice hours you will need to complete.
If you have been out of clinical practice but your registration is still active, you can apply for a post and establish if you can be supported by a preceptorship programme. The programme will support you to update your skills and knowledge and ensure that you are job ready. Job opportunities are advertised on the NHS Jobs website [9].

Will my course be funded?

Yes, Health Education England will pay your course fees, clinical placement fee and stipendiary to help towards travel, childcare and book costs.

Will additional financial support be available?

A £500 stipendiary is provided to support you to return to practice and will help towards travel, childcare and book costs etc. The university return to practice lead will be able to provide further details at your interview.

Will the course lead directly to a job once I complete it?

Many organisations now offer RTP placements that lead to a permanent position, but it is entirely dependent on each organisation and it is advisable to explore this further at your interview. NHS organisations advertise posts on the NHS Jobs website [9].

In some areas there is an employer-led return to practice programme, where you are employed as a return to practice nurse, normally on band 3, and are guaranteed a post once you have successfully completed the programme. Keep an eye on NHS Jobs [9] for return to practice nursing opportunities.

I have retired and receive an NHS pension but am interested in returning part-time. Is this possible?

Return to practice programmes [10] and RTP - general practice nursing programmes [11] are usually delivered part-time. In respect of employment, we recommend reading the factsheet on the NHS Pensions website [12].

NHS employment opportunities are advertised on the NHS Jobs website [9].

What is abatement and how will it affect me?

Abatement is the process by which your NHS pension is reduced pound-for-pound if your earnings on re-employment in the NHS, plus the enhanced element of your NHS pension, exceed your pre-retirement NHS pensionable earnings. Abatement may apply if you return to NHS employment after retirement. Further information on abatement can be found on the Business Services Authority website [13].

Will I be able to work flexibly if I return?
Flexible working for nurses is an option. We suggest you discuss this at your interview with the employer who is supporting your clinical placement.

Is there anything I can do to prepare for the RTP programme?

Universities offer a reading list of key documents that you might be interested in studying to help you update your knowledge of current policy. Universities also offer study skills courses to help you prepare for studying on a university course. This would be discussed at interview with the return to practice lead.

Local trusts and universities offer open days too so you can ask any questions before you apply for the programme.

How long will the course be?

The return to practice programme can take three to 12 months to complete, and is a combination of classroom and placement-based learning. The hours you spend on placement will vary, depending on how long you have been off the register. This will be negotiated with you when you apply.

How do I find out about courses in my area?

Use our course finder [14] to find return to nursing practice [10] and RTP - general practice nursing programmes [15] where you live or want to study. Please note the Come back to nursing website (comeback.hee.nhs.uk) is now closed.

I haven’t practised as a nurse for quite a while. Does that matter?

The return to practice course is open to all, regardless of how long you have been out of practice. The course will update you on any new developments in nursing and you will have support and mentoring throughout.

I am a nurse outside England. Can I apply for the programme?

Funding from Health Education England for the return to practice programme is available for nurses who currently reside and work in England. Nurses from outside England, for example Wales, are welcome to apply for the programme, but there is no funding available for them.

How will I be supported once I return to a nursing role?

Re-registered practitioners will be supported by a preceptorship programme on their return to the workforce and the programme can be tailored to your requirements. View Health Education England's video about preceptorship for nurses [16]

Source URL: https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/returning-nursing/return-nursing-faqs

Links
[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NMC