

Nursing applications in England up by over a third to 48,830

- UCAS figures published today show a 34% increase in applications to nursing courses in England
- Government continues to work to deliver on the manifesto commitment for 50,000 more nurses in the NHS

Health and care ministers have welcomed the latest figures out today showing the number of applications to undergraduate nursing courses this year is a third higher than last year.

UCAS has received 48,830 applications to nursing courses in England, up from 35,960 at the same point last year, representing a 34% increase.

Last year, the number of people accepting a place on a nursing course increased by 27% compared to 2019. Health Education England is working with health and education sector partners to make sure there are enough places for all suitable applicants who will go on to take up vital jobs in the NHS or social care sector.

The figures for England also show:

- an increase in applications of more than 50% among 25 to 34 year olds and 43% among 35-and-overs
- a 41% rise in male applicants

Minister for Care, Helen Whately said:

I'm delighted to see such an incredible boost in this year's applications, with more mature applicants helping to contribute to a diverse and truly representative nursing workforce. Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to support our health and social care services.

These are the nurses of the future who will help the NHS and social care recover from this pandemic and continue to deliver world-class care to patients for years to come.

These figures are a testament to the work of Health Education England and UCAS in highlighting nursing as a rewarding and accessible career path, as well as the remarkable achievements of all health and care professionals over the past year.

We're another step closer to delivering 50,000 more nurses for our NHS and providing better healthcare for everyone.

Last year, the government introduced a new training grant for eligible

nursing, midwifery and allied health profession (including paramedic) students of at least £5,000 a year, which does not need to be paid back.

Nursing students will also benefit from additional financial support for childcare and for those who study specialisms which typically have fewer applicants such as mental health or learning disability nursing. Eligibility for this is in line with existing criteria for tuition fee and maintenance support from the Student Loans Company.

The data is for applications received by 29 January 2021 which was the equal consideration deadline for full-time undergraduate applications for university and college courses that start this autumn.

UK-wide figures show total applications for nursing courses have risen by almost a third (32%) to reach 60,130.

Record year for UK's £8.9bn cyber security sector

- New report shows almost 50,000 people are now employed in UK cyber security
- Number of active cyber security firms in the UK increased 21 per cent on last year
- Sector contributed more than £4bn to the economy, attracting £800m of investment
- Cyber firms have stepped up to help the NHS in the national fight against coronavirus by providing vital technical support

The UK's growing cyber industry attracted record investment last year despite the global pandemic, according to a new government report.

With Covid-19 forcing more business and social activity online, the new figures reveal an increase in the number of cyber security companies and people working for them, as the government continues its drive to build back safer from the pandemic.

The [DCMS Annual Cyber Sector Report](#), which tracks the UK's cyber security industry across a range of indicators between April 2019 and December 2020, reveals a 21 per cent increase in firms operating in the field, bringing the total number to 1,483.

There was a nine per cent rise in employment in the industry with more than 3,800 new full time jobs created, bringing the total number of people working in the sector to 46,683.

The sector is now worth an estimated £8.9 billion, with a record £800 million

of investment raised by firms.

Digital Minister Matt Warman will announce the findings at a CyberASAP event today, which gives UK researchers the opportunity to showcase their innovative new cyber security products to potential buyers.

Ahead of the virtual event, Digital Minister Matt Warman said:

The need for cutting-edge cyber security has never been greater and this resilient sector is growing, diversifying and solidifying its status as a jewel in the UK's tech crown.

With more than 3,800 new jobs created, firms – large and small – are doing vital work keeping people and businesses secure online so we can build back safer from the pandemic.

I am committed to supporting the industry to reach new heights, create more jobs and lead new innovations in this field.

The main findings from the report are:

- Despite the current economic climate, 2020 was a new record year for cyber security investment with UK cyber security businesses raising over £821 million across 73 deals – more than twice that raised in 2019
- The sector's total annual revenue has continued to rise (by 7 per cent), reaching £8.9 billion within the most recent financial year
- The sector contributed more than £4 billion to the economy – up 6 per cent in the last year, with mainly mature firms driving growth
- The majority (65 per cent) of the 46,683 cyber workforce are employed by large firms (250+ employees).

This year's survey also suggests that more than half of firms (54 per cent) are now based outside of London and the South East, with cyber security clusters flourishing across the country in areas such as Scotland, Northern Ireland and North West England.

The most commonly provided cyber security products and services include cyber professional services, threat intelligence, monitoring, detection and analysis. The research highlights particular growth in firms offering solutions for industrial control systems and IoT security, demonstrating the sector's ability to adapt and meet emerging challenges, such as the need to secure smart cities.

The data reveals that while nine in ten companies (89 per cent) felt Covid-19 had impacted their business, many of these firms have quickly adjusted and innovated within the current economic climate.

Despite some firms in the sector feeling the pressure, many have still found the capacity to offer vital technical support to the NHS, and other critical national services, sometimes on a pro-bono basis.

Edinburgh firm Quorum Cyber helped strengthen the cyber defences of the NHS and local councils during the pandemic and created a number of skilled jobs. Meanwhile SureCert, who have offices in London, Edinburgh and Belfast, helped ensure the rapid deployment of hundreds of Covid volunteers through its background check service.

Ian Savage, Founder and CEO of SureCert, said:

SureCert won one of the TechForce 19 competitions from NHSx in May. This competition provided funding for solutions that could find, background check and deploy hundreds of volunteers to support vulnerable people in communities across Scotland and Northern Ireland. SureCert focused on processing identity, reference and criminal record checks for volunteers, maximising trust during the pandemic.

Federico Charosky, Managing Director of Quorum Cyber, said:

Quorum Cyber have been incredibly lucky to be in a position to help, both directly and indirectly. Whether it was through providing cyber security services to the public and private sector, including delivering Security Operation Centre and Incident Response capabilities to local authorities and the NHS, or by hiring well over 25 people since the beginning of lockdown, including taking three graduate apprentices. Quorum Cyber continues to pursue our mission: we want to help good people win.

While the number of cyber security firms continued to grow despite the pandemic, the government recognises the importance of making sure small and medium-sized scale-ups can continue to access support to grow in the years ahead.

UK startup businesses driving innovation and development have been helped through the coronavirus outbreak with a £1.25 billion government support package and the government has continued to back cyber security startups through programmes such as the LORCA cyber accelerator and the NCSC Accelerator to ensure early stage cyber businesses have the support they need to continue.

The DCMS-funded CyberASAP programme supports the commercialisation of cyber security research from UK universities. Its event today will see a fourth cohort of teams demonstrate their new products to an audience of potential customers, investors and other key figures in the cyber security sector.

Julian David, Chief Executive Officer, techUK said:

Reliable Cyber Security is essential for all organisations as they accelerate digital transformation in the wake of ongoing COVID-19

disruption and the UK industry is responding to that need. This research shows a sector going from strength to strength, with increasing investment in our growing cyber ecosystem and, perhaps most significantly, uptake of the technologies and services keeping UK citizens and business safe.

One key finding is that 54% of cyber companies are now based outside London and the South-East, an encouraging change which will improve cyber resilience across all the nations and regions of the UK, as well as sharing the economic prosperity offered by this fast-growing sector. This regional development is one area which techUK will continue to actively partner with DCMS, through initiatives like Cyber Exchange, as Government and industry continue to strengthen the UK's position as a leading cyber nation.

Notes to Editors:

- The [UK Cyber Security Sectoral Analysis 2021 can be found here](#).
- The Government's £1.9 billion National Cyber Security Strategy is protecting the nation in cyber space and helping to make the UK the safest place to live and work online.
- The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) commissioned Ipsos MORI, in conjunction with Perspective Economics, the Centre for Secure Information Technologies (CSIT) at Queen's University Belfast, and Professor Steven Furnell (University of Plymouth) in January 2020 to undertake this updated analysis of the UK's cyber security sector.
- The study tracks the UK's cyber security industry across a range of indicators between April 2019 and December 2020. This includes economic and financial statistics covering April 2019 – March 2020 (FY19/20), survey data gathered between May and July 2020, and modelling conducted between August and October 2020. Investment data analysis was conducted in January 2021 and captures investment activity for the full year of 2020 (January – December 2020).
- This latest analysis builds upon the baseline UK Cyber Security Sectoral Analysis which used data from 2019 and was published in January 2020. The 2018 report provided a baseline for the number of UK cyber security companies; the cyber security sector's contribution to the UK economy; the number of personnel employed in the cyber security sector; and an overview of the products and services offered by these firms.
- The [Cyber Security Sectoral Analysis 2020 report can be found here](#) and the [first sectoral report from 2018 can be found here](#).

- As part of its levelling up agenda the government is investing heavily in the country's digital skills, R&D capabilities and world-class digital infrastructure to make sure cyber firms have the right environment to succeed.
 - The government's Cyber Skills Immediate Impact Fund incentivises organisations to develop cyber security training to boost diversity and attract more people to the profession. Initiatives such as Cyber Discovery, an online game that helps teens learn cyber skills in engaging ways, and the CyberFirst Girls Competition, which inspires school girls to enter the profession, are helping make sure UK businesses have a strong pipeline of diverse talent for years to come.
 - In the summer the government announced a £10 million fund to help develop secure future technologies through its Digital Security by Design Challenge. The programme has the potential to prevent hackers from remotely taking control of digital systems such as autonomous cars, personal computers or smart home security systems, meaning people and online businesses are better protected.
 - The UK boasts world-class universities that are pioneering cutting-edge academic research, including 19 which have been recognised as Academic Centres of Excellence in cyber security research. Bristol and London are also home to three Centres for Doctoral Training, funded by the EPSRC Research Council, which are training the next generation of cyber security research leaders.
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February interim findings from COVID-19 REACT-1 study published

- Over 85,400 volunteers tested in England between 4 and 13 February 2021 as part of one of the largest COVID-19 studies
- Initial findings from Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI show infections fell by more than two-thirds from the last REACT report, with 1 in 196 people infected
- Infection levels remain high and it is critical everyone continues to follow the rules to help bring down infections even further and reduce pressure on the NHS

The [interim findings from the ninth report of REACT-1](#), one of the country's largest studies into COVID-19 infections in England, have been published today by Imperial College London and Ipsos MORI.

Over 85,400 volunteers were tested in England between 4 and 13 February to examine the levels of infection in the general population. The findings show infections in England have fallen significantly since the last report in January.

These latest findings demonstrate the impact lockdown restrictions are having on reducing infections across the country. Infections still remain high with more people in hospital than at the peak last April and hospital admissions for COVID-19 are at around 1,600 a day. It is vital everyone continues to play their part by staying at home and getting vaccinated when invited.

The main findings from the ninth REACT study show:

- national prevalence fell by two thirds from 1.57% to 0.51%, or 51 per 10,000 infected, compared to the last REACT report from 6 to 22 January
- a halving time of 15 days and an R number of 0.72, based on the prevalence observed at the end of the last report and today's interim findings
- regional prevalence fell in all areas compared to the last REACT report from 6 to 22 January. It was highest in the North West (1.38% to 0.91%) and North East (1.22% to 0.82%). There were substantial falls in prevalence compared to the last report in January in London (2.83% to 0.54%), West Midlands (1.66% to 0.33%), East of England (1.78% to 0.54%), South East (1.61% to 0.30%), East Midlands (1.16% to 0.51%). There was a smaller fall in Yorkshire and the Humber (0.80% to 0.61%)
- prevalence fell substantially across all age groups compared to the last REACT report from 6 to 22 January. Prevalence fell from 0.93% to 0.30% among the over-65s. Highest prevalence is among 18 to 24-year-olds at 0.89% and those aged 5 to 12 at 0.86%
- large household size, living in a deprived neighbourhood, and areas with higher numbers of Asian ethnicity individuals were associated with increased prevalence
- healthcare and care home workers were more likely to test positive compared to other workers

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

“These findings show encouraging signs infections are now heading in the right direction across the country, but we must not drop our guard.

“Cases and hospital admissions remain high – over 20,000 COVID-19 patients are in hospital – so it is vital we all remain vigilant and follow the rules as our vaccination rollout continues at pace.

“I urge everyone to continue to stay at home – remember hands, face, space – and get your jab when you receive your invite.”

While the vaccine programme continues to expand to protect as many people as possible, with over 15 million people vaccinated, we do not yet know whether being vaccinated stops someone from passing the virus on to others. It will also be some time before the impact of the vaccination programme reduces pressures on hospitals.

It is critical everyone continues to follow the rules, stays at home, reduces contact with others and maintains social distancing – remembering hands, face, space.

Professor Paul Elliott, director of the programme at Imperial, said:

“These encouraging results show that lockdown measures are effectively bringing infections down. It’s reassuring that the reduction in numbers of infections occurred in all ages and in most regions across the country. “While the trends we’ve observed are good news, we need to all work to keep infections down by sticking to the measures which are designed to protect us and our health system.”

Kelly Beaver, Managing Director, Public Affairs at Ipsos MORI, said:

“The reduction in prevalence from our last REACT round is very welcome, particularly the very large reduction in London. But it’s important that we continue following all the measures that the government has set out so that we can continue to see further reductions, and make progress in beating the pandemic.”

This report is the latest from the REACT study which was commissioned by DHSC and carried out by a world-class team of scientists, clinicians and researchers at Imperial College London, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and Ipsos MORI.

Background information

Read more information on the [Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission \(REACT\) programme of work](#)

This study falls under pillar 4 of the COVID-19 National Testing Programme, which focuses on mass surveillance in the general population.

See the [REACT-1 studies on GOV.UK](#).

Government plan to transform Oxford-Cambridge Arc into UK's fastest growing economic region

- Generational plan will unlock the long-term potential of the region, transforming the Arc into a world-class place to live and work sustainably.
- An intention to establish a new single voice for the area – an Arc Growth Body – to drive and support economic growth

An ambitious plan to unleash the economic and cultural potential of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, to transform it into one of the world's premier growth corridors and a world-leader in sustainability, has been announced today (Thursday 18 February) by Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher.

The spatial framework plan will help to create thousands of jobs, drive investment, protect and enhance the environment, and provide the infrastructure and beautiful new places needed to make the area – which spans the five counties of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire – an even greater place to live and work.

The results, due to be published in 2022, will give communities a chance to shape the long-term future of their area and will help to ensure the benefits of growth are felt across the region.

The intention to establish an Arc Growth Body will also help unleash the area's potential as a global innovation powerhouse by promoting the Arc internationally.

With the right interventions and investment, local analysis suggests that by 2050 economic output could double to over £200 billion.

To realise the full potential of local economies and the Arc as a whole, the government is also considering how further investment could create jobs, support the delivery of more homes, and support local economic growth.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is already home to world-leading economic, cultural and scientific assets.

We know for instance Cambridge's rate of patent applications – a key indicator of innovation – is the highest in the United Kingdom, while nearby Milton Keynes is the fastest growing city in the country.

We want to take this region to the next phase of its renaissance by unlocking its full potential and our plans will drive investment where it is needed and ensure, as growth happens, we create well-designed, inclusive and vibrant places and communities.

The OxCam spatial framework will allow us to plan positively for growth and we look forward to working with our local partners over the coming months to strengthen our vision and approach to the Arc.

Councillor Barry Wood, Chair of The Arc Leaders Group and Leader Cherwell

District Council said:

We welcome the continuing commitment from Government to the Oxford to Cambridge Arc through today's announcements.

We look forward to working together with local people and our local partners to deliver an economy that works for all, underpinned by a high-quality natural environment. This will include planning for and enabling development that is truly inclusive and sustainable which delivers real benefits for our communities and environment now and in the future.

The Arc already is home to over 2 million jobs and provides a place to live for over 3.7 million residents.

The Arc's success is key to the United Kingdom's national prosperity, international competitiveness, and ability to meet the challenges and opportunities the country will face over the next century, including climate change and supporting nature recovery technological change fighting COVID-19 and preventing future pandemics.

This regional success will build on the work of the government that has helped millions of people continue to provide for their families as part of its [Plan for Jobs](#) to protect, support and create employment.

The [Oxford to Cambridge \(OxCam\) Arc](#) the name given to a cross-government initiative that supports planning for the future made up of the five counties of Oxfordshire, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire. It includes:

- 3 county councils: Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire.
- 17 district councils: City of Oxford, South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse, West Oxfordshire, Cherwell, Northampton, South Northamptonshire, Daventry, Wellingborough, Kettering, Corby, East Northamptonshire, City of Cambridge, South Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire;
- 6 unitary authorities: Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes, Luton, Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and City of Peterborough;
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is a unique place, home to cutting-edge research, globally renowned science, and technology clusters, and some of the most productive towns and cities in the country.

Oxford and Cambridge are world-leading centres of research and innovation. There are ten significant higher education institutions, including Cranfield University, with its world-leading specialisms in automotive and aerospace engineering, the Open University, and the world-leading centres of learning at the University of Oxford and University of Cambridge.

The Arc contains a vibrant natural environment and a rich cultural heritage, and it is home to some of the country's fastest growing and most innovative places.

Cambridge's rate of patent applications – a key indicator of innovation – is the highest in the UK, at over 12 times the national average. Milton Keynes is the fastest growing city in the country. Work on the COVID-19 vaccine, testing and treatment is the latest example of the Arc's unique innovation and business environment leading efforts to tackle a global challenge.

The Arc already is home to over 2 million jobs and provides a place to live for over 3.7 million residents.

With the right interventions and investment, local economic forecasts suggest that by 2050 we would see economic output doubling to over £200 billion. The Arc's success is key to the UK's national prosperity, international competitiveness, and ability to meet the challenges and opportunities we will face as a country over the next century, including climate change and supporting nature recovery, technological change, fighting COVID-19 and preventing future pandemics.

"The Arc" offers a significant opportunity for the government and partners to work together to support the harmonious delivery of improved connectivity, productivity and place-making, whilst ensuring pioneering environmental standards and enhancements are delivered and the government's 25 Year Environment Plan is put into action.

The desirability of the Arc as a place to live, visit, work and invest is in part due to the quality of the local environment, the rich and diverse character of its landscapes, and the resultant high value of the area's natural capital.

Spatial framework

The spatial framework will set a plan and policies with the status of national planning policy. Based on a long-term, strategic approach to planning for growth across the area, it will help to unlock the long-term potential of the area in a sustainable way, improving the Arc as a place to live and work. It will give communities a chance to shape the long-term future of their area and will help to ensure the benefits of growth are felt across the region.

We are today publishing a [policy paper](#), which sets out the approach we intend to take, including:

- a timeline for developing the framework,
- how we will engage communities and work with local partners, and
- the high-level scope of the framework, including the approach it will take to planning for the environment, infrastructure, economic growth, and new homes and place-making.

Growth body

- Capitalising on the globally renowned assets of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc can help to lead the UK's economic recovery. That is why government has today (18 February) announced its intent to establish a Growth Body in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc.
 - This will give a clear economic leadership voice to the Arc. This announcement builds on government's support for the region including connecting communities through East West Rail and supporting a long-term plan for sustainable growth with the spatial framework.
 - Government will work with local partners to ensure that the Growth Body is tailored to the region's unique opportunities.
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Lord Frost CMG appointed as a Minister of State in the Cabinet Office

Press release

The Queen has been pleased to approve the appointment of Lord Frost CMG as a Minister of State in the Cabinet Office.



The Queen has been pleased to approve the appointment of Lord Frost CMG as a Minister of State in the Cabinet Office.

Lord Frost will be a full member of Cabinet. His appointment will take effect from 1 March 2021.

Background

As earlier signalled, Lord Frost will lead the UK's institutional and strategic relationship with the EU and help drive through changes to maximise the opportunities of Brexit, including on international trade and economic issues.

This will include:

- co-ordinating relations with the EU institutions and the 27 member states, working closely with the FCDO and other Departments with an interest;
- working on domestic reform and regulation to maximise on the opportunities of Brexit;
- leading on central coordination and policy resolution on international trade policy, working closely with DIT; and
- becoming the UK Chair of the Partnership Council and the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee.

Published 17 February 2021