

# Thinking Nursing Globally - Nursing Shortage, Challenges and Solutions: UK [England]

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# Background

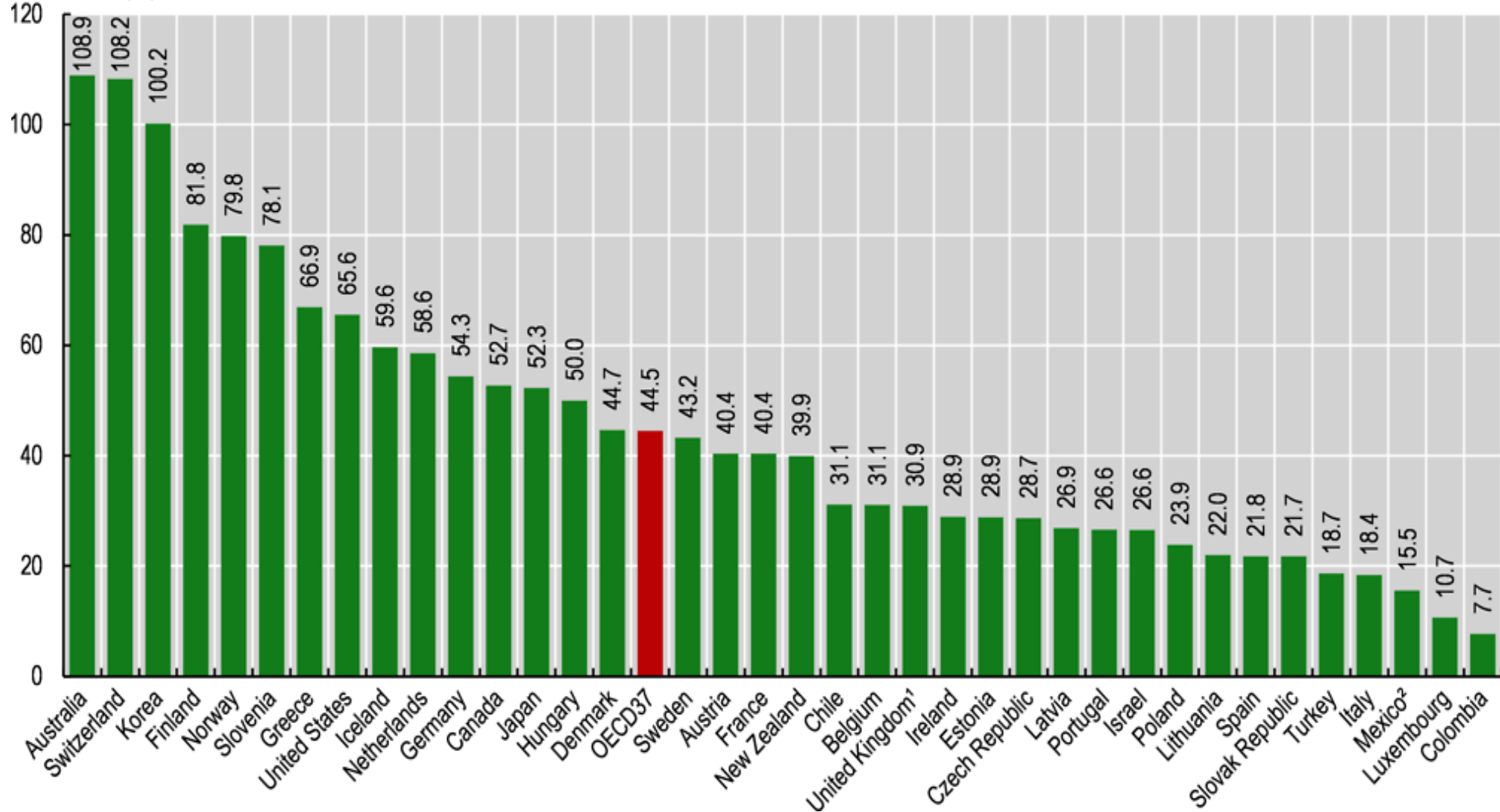
- National Health Service (NHS funded from general taxation) covers vast majority of secondary and primary care; social care a mix of public sector/ NGO, private nursing homes; small- for- profit sector hospital sector
- Nurse education is university based, 3 or 4 year degree programme
- Only one level of professional nurse- registered nurse
- Approx 700,000 registered nurses on the UK council register
- Approx 80% of all registered nurses in employment are in the NHS
- [In NHS England] no staffing norms or skill mix

# Challenges

- Nurse shortages exacerbated by the pandemic: 40,000 registered nurse vacancies in NHS England [10%]; numbers have increased but not kept pace with higher demand;
- High workload, stress, burnout: early signs of pandemic related increased absenteeism, early retirement, reduced hours
- Insufficient numbers being trained [OECD data- next slide]. 7% reduction in intake in 2021/22 compared to previous year
- Very heavy reliance on international recruitment [next slide]
- Ageing of the workforce will increase replacement requirements
- Pay/ cost of living/ inflation [10%]- nurses currently in vote for possible industrial action

# Nursing graduates, 2019 (or nearest year)(OECD)

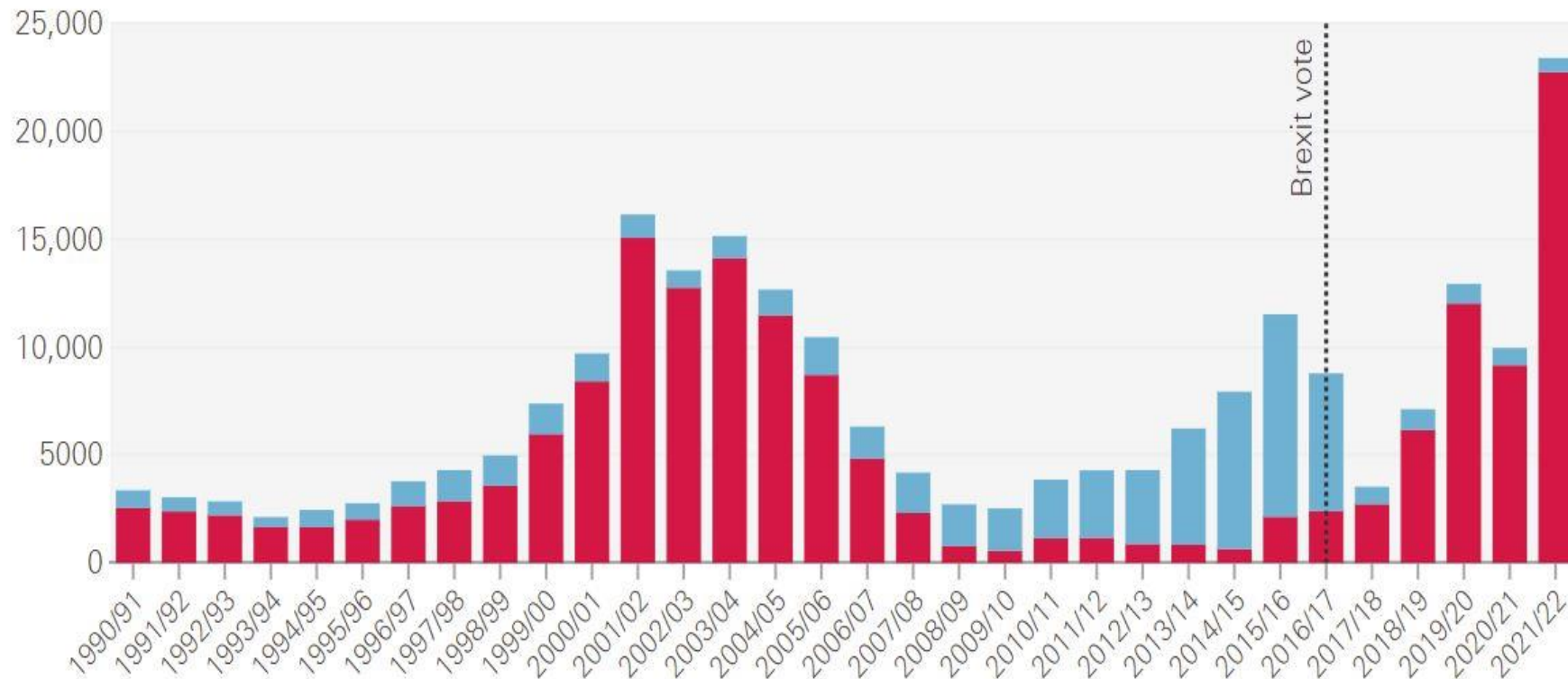
Per 100 000 population



# UK: Annual no. of International registrants, EU and non EU countries 1990-2022

Annual number of new NMC registrants from non-EEA and EEA countries, 1990/91–2019/20

■ Non-EEA ■ EU/EEA



# Solutions

- Better management and alignment of international recruitment with other solutions
- More investment in supporting increase in numbers in UK based training
- Support for student nurses to reduce attrition numbers during training
- “Stretch” career structure- pay of experienced and specialist nurses should be increased to support retention
- A need for a national health care workforce plan

# Take home messages

- International recruitment can be a quick fix solution but must be ethical and effective, and not become a long term substitute for investment in the overall nurse workforce
- Running a health system at 10% nurse vacancies is not sustainable

# References

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- Buchan et al (2022) Where next for NHS nurses pay <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/where-next-for-nhs-nurses-pay>
- Buchan Catton Shaffer (2022) Sustain and Retain. ICNM. <https://www.icn.ch/system/files/2022-01/Sustain%20and%20Retain%20in%202022%20and%20Beyond-%20The%20global%20nursing%20workforce%20and%20the%20COVID-19%20pandemic.pdf>