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Hundreds of Scottish-trained nurses every year are seeking work abroad, new statistics have revealed.

Since 2012/13, 1609 nurses who qualified here have filled out verification requests from the Nursing and Midwifery Council, which enables them to practice in other countries.

The potential exodus coincides with vacancy rates of nurses and midwives reaching a record high earlier this year, and wards across the country struggling to plug the gaps.

Shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said more had to be done to ensure nurses who train in Scotland are then encouraged to stay here and work.

The NMC statistics follow revelations in October that 3000 Scottish-trained doctors have left the country since 2008.

The Scottish Conservatives have warned the “brain drain” of both is not only leaving hospitals short of key staff, but shortchanging the training system which is meant to generate medics for Scotland’s NHS.

## **Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary Miles Briggs said:**

“It’s extremely worrying that hundreds of nurses every year signal their intention to leave and work abroad.

“At a time when recruitment is so challenging, the last thing we need is Scottish-trained nurses upping sticks and moving elsewhere.

“Clearly more needs to be done to incentivise them to stay, otherwise patients and the staff left behind will be the ones who suffer the consequences.

“The SNP can’t point the finger elsewhere – it must try to attract nurses who’ve left back to Scotland, and do more to make sure others don’t leave in the first place.

“In an organisation the size of the NHS there will always be departures to work overseas, but for more than 1600 to have indicated they want to leave in

the past five years is alarming.

“We know the SNP are presiding over a brain drain in general practice but it appears they are also presiding over a brain drain in nursing.”