



Andrea Sutcliffe, Chief Executive and Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council officially opening the new centre.

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Nursing leaders officially open new national nursing test centre at Northumbria University

A new national nursing and midwifery examination centre has officially opened at Northumbria University in Newcastle.

The new NMC Competence Test Centre, based at the University's Coach Lane Campus, will host up to 7,000 nurses, midwives and nursing associates each year for their 'OSCE' Observed Structured Clinical Examination.

The exam is the practical part of the Test of Competence that all overseas-trained nurses or those returning after a career break are required to take before they can be registered to practice.

Until now there were only three test centres in the UK, but with rising demand to bring people with the right skills and knowledge onto the UK's nursing register as quickly as possible, the [Nursing and Midwifery Council](#) needed to increase national testing capacity. As such, two new centres were announced to open in Newcastle and Leeds.

Andrea Sutcliffe CBE, Chief Executive and Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council visited the University to officially open the new centre, together with Duncan Burton, the Deputy Chief Nurse at NHS England.

Andrea Sutcliffe and Duncan Burton on a tour of the NMC Competence Test Centre at Northumbria University.

Following a private tour to see the new facilities first-hand, Andrea and Duncan met with an invited audience of healthcare leaders from across the region.

Andrea said: "Northumbria is one of the leading universities in the country and it's great to see the partnership with The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Newcastle City Council in creating this centre, helping to boost our national testing capacity.

"The nurses and midwives who do their tests here will be welcomed with open arms by their colleagues in health and social care and will play a vital part in providing the safe, kind, effective care the public have every right to expect."

She added: "As a North Eastern girl myself, I am particularly excited we now have this new hub in the North. Knowing how welcoming and supportive people from the North East are, I'm sure it will make our professions even more attractive and accessible to candidates."

Professor Andrew Wathey added: "We are all aware of the significant pressures faced by the NHS – more so than ever in recent years – and that

there is a clear need for more nurses on the front line.

“Northumbria University is already one of the largest providers of education for healthcare professionals in the North of England and we are delighted to work in partnership with the Nursing and Midwifery Council and others to bring more nurses onto the UK register.”

Maurya Cushlow, Executive Chief Nurse at Newcastle Hospitals said that having a new national centre in Newcastle will be a huge benefit for Trusts and healthcare providers. “We are delighted to see the opening of this high-quality testing centre in our region which will support Trust locally, regionally and nationally. As a partner in this centre, we look forward to supporting it go from strength to strength,” she said.

The OSCE is part of the [Test of Competence](#) for nurses, midwives and nursing associate and involves a face-to-face examination using actors or simulation models to play patients presenting with a variety of medical conditions or ailments. Nurses, midwives and nursing associates are assessed on how they care for and communicate with the patient to ensure they meet the required standards.

Anyone wanting to find out more information can visit [Northumbria University's OSCE centre](#) website.

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