



Department of Health & Social Care

Immigration White Paper – Social Care Q&A

The full Immigration White Paper can be found at [Restoring control over the immigration system: white paper - GOV.UK](#)

Question	Answer
Will the ending of overseas recruitment for social care also include care workers within the NHS?	Yes, the end to overseas recruitment will apply to all care worker and senior care worker roles.
What will happen during the transition period?	<p>There will be a transition period until 2028 (to be kept under review), during which time individuals already in the UK in a different category of visa can switch into the Health and Care route provided they have been legally working for the employer who wishes to sponsor them for a minimum of 3 months. This means, for example, that care providers will continue to be able to access students and individuals on the graduate route who we know have provided a vital role in workforce capacity in recent years.</p> <p>Anyone sponsored as ‘care workers and home carers’ or ‘senior care workers’, who want to extend their visas or change employers, can continue to do so in the normal way. These arrangements include those who need to change employers following a sponsor licence revocation.</p> <p>The Government remains concerned about levels of exploitation and sponsor non-compliance in the sector and so these arrangements will be kept under review.</p>
What happens to international care workers after the 2028 transition period?	International workers who are already sponsored to work legally in the sector by the end of the transition period will be able to continue to extend their stay, change sponsors and, when qualified, apply to settle. These arrangements include those who need to switch employers following a sponsor licence revocation.
After the transition period ends in July 2028, will workers from other routes be able to switch to the care visa?	No, workers from other visa routes will no longer be able to switch on to the Health and Care visa in the care worker or senior care worker SOC codes after the transition period ends.
Will existing care workers/displaced workers have to work for the sponsoring employer 3 months before switching?	<p>No, the 3-month requirement for individuals switching into care worker roles is only applicable to workers switching from other immigration routes e.g., student or graduate routes.</p> <p>The process for changing employer or extending a visa remains the same.</p>



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Why are you adding the 3-month requirement when recruiting from other routes?	<p>The requirement ensures new entrants to the route have the requisite skills and experience to work in the adult social care sector, while supporting continuity of successful employment.</p> <p>It allows UKVI to satisfy themselves that the employer wishing to sponsor the worker has a good record of compliance with UK employment laws including National Minimum Wage regulations.</p> <p>The sector can also continue to recruit those with general work rights as they do not have restrictions on their employment</p>
Is there a minimum number of hours individuals need to be working before applying for sponsorship?	<p>Details of the requirements to be met can be found in the:</p> <p>“Additional requirements for care workers and senior care workers” section of the Sponsor a Skilled Worker guidance (SK4), which can be found at:</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/workers-and-temporary-workers-sponsor-a-skilled-worker</p>
Can I sponsor a current employee who is on a different visa route if their visa expires before the end of the three-month employment window?	<p>Applications falling short of the 3-month window by a very small margin may be considered on a case-by-case basis.</p>
What if someone loses their job in the three-month period before they switch to the care visa or is TUPEd?	<p>Where you are applying to sponsor a worker from another immigration route, you will need to demonstrate they have been legally working for you for at least 3 months. You must retain evidence of this work for example, pay slips or contract of employment.</p> <p>You cannot sponsor a worker switching from another route if their previous employment in the sector was with another provider; you must first employ them for 3 months.</p> <p>The requirement ensures new entrants to the route have the requisite skills and experience to work in the adult social care sector, while supporting continuity of successful employment.</p> <p>Where you have received a worker via the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, providing that worker was legally working for their previous employer (the “sending” employer) in an applicable occupation code (either “6145 Care workers and home carers” or “6146 Senior care workers”) and continues to work for the new employer (the “receiving” employer) in the same occupation code with no changes to their terms and conditions and has cumulatively worked for 3 months in that role, they will be eligible for sponsorship. You will need to retain evidence of the TUPE and</p>



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	the worker's length of service with the sending employer, as part of your record keeping duties.
Will providers still have to first attempt to recruit from the redeployment pool?	<p>No, the requirement for sponsors to first try to recruit from the pool of Skilled Workers seeking new sponsorship is being removed.</p> <p>DHSC is providing up to £12.5m to regional partnerships in 2025/26 to support workers impacted by non-compliance to find alternative employment in the sector and will continue this work.</p> <p>Providers with suitable vacancies should continue to work with regional partnerships to recruit from this pool of workers. Regional partnership contact details are available on Gov.UK Support offer to international ASC workers whose employer's sponsor licence has been revoked - GOV.UK.</p>
If the redeployment process no longer applies, what is the role/function of DHSC funded regional partnerships? Will they continue to be funded?	<p>Yes, DHSC is providing up to £12.5m to the regional partnerships in 2025/26. They will continue to support international care workers impacted by sponsor non-compliance into new sponsored employment.</p> <p>A significant number of experienced care workers are ready and keen to pursue a career in social care. Providers with suitable vacancies should contact the regional partnership in their area to consider this pool of workers. Regional partnership contact details are available on Gov.UK: Support offer to international ASC workers whose employer's sponsor licence has been revoked - GOV.UK</p>
Are employers required to prioritise recruitment of displaced international workers over domestic workers?	<p>There is no requirement for providers to prioritise workers impacted by sponsor licence revocation over domestic staff.</p> <p>The requirement for sponsors to first try to recruit from the pool of Skilled Workers seeking new sponsorship only applied where providers were recruiting internationally. The aim of this requirement was to prioritise international workers already in the UK before recruiting from overseas and has since been removed, as of 22nd July.</p>
Are there any plans to waive or reduce fees paid by employers when sponsoring displaced workers to encourage recruitment from this pool?	<p>No. Fees related to sponsorship of international workers are applicable to all workers and there are no plans to change the charge to providers.</p> <p>Sponsors are prohibited from charging or recovering costs from workers for the cost of sponsoring them.</p> <p>Employers who wish to sponsor workers are required to pay for certificates of sponsorship, sponsor licenses and the associated administration themselves.</p>



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<p>What is the current salary threshold requirements for migrant care workers?</p>	<p>The minimum salary threshold for care workers and senior care workers is £25,000 per year or £12.82 per hour, whichever is higher. Failing to meet whichever is higher would constitute a breach of immigration rules and could result in penalties, including having your sponsor licence revoked.</p> <p>For example, offering a salary of £25,000 for a 40-hour work week equates to £12.02 per hour, which is below the salary threshold and would mean the provider is not compliant with the sponsorship requirements. To meet the hourly requirement of £12.82, the salary would need to be at least £26,625 for a 40-hour work week.</p> <p>It is important to note, this increase only applies to visas issued after the 9th of April 2025, which includes displaced workers who apply for a new visa when matched to a new sponsor. Those already in the UK on a valid health and care visa are not subject to the new threshold, however, they must still at least be paid in line with the National Minimum Wage (currently £12.21 an hour for workers aged 21 and over as of April 2025).</p> <p>For migrant care workers aged 18-20, while the National Minimum Wage for this age group is set at £10 as of April 2025, they must still be paid at least the minimum salary required by their visa conditions.</p>
<p>Do the regional partnerships also support workers impacted by exploitation or non-compliant sponsors but have not been affected by a sponsor licence revocation?</p>	<p>The regional partnerships can support any workers impacted by sponsor non-compliance, including situations where providers are not offering sufficient hours.</p> <p>However, the regional partnerships are permitted to prioritise or solely support workers impacted by sponsor licence revocations particularly where capacity may be limited and demand may be higher. These cases are often treated as more urgent due to the workers leave to remain in the UK being at risk. Therefore, the level of support offered may vary by region, and in some areas, only workers affected by revocations are currently being supported.</p> <p>In cases such as a provider failing to meet their sponsor duties to provide contracted hours, this is an immigration offence and should be reported to UKVI.</p>
<p>Where a displaced worker does not have the skills to work in the sector, what should they be advised to do?</p>	<p>Where a worker does not have the correct skills to work in the care sector and therefore cannot be supported into new employment in ASC, they should be advised to seek independent immigration advice.</p>



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	Support with this can be found at: Adviser Finder
What happens if a displaced worker is not in employment by 22 nd July 2025, but their employer's licence was revoked more than 60 days ago?	<p>The end to overseas recruitment does not change their status, workers impacted by revocation will need to regularise their stay in the UK through new sponsorship or another immigration route. Individuals should seek independent immigration advice.</p> <p>When a sponsor's licence is revoked UKVI will write to individuals sponsored by the provider. The individuals existing permissions remain valid until the Home Office write to confirm their leave has been shortened or cancelled, or until it expires.</p> <p>The 60-day window to regularise stay or leave the UK only starts once the Home Office informs the individual their visa has been cancelled following a revocation.</p>
How will the plan to end overseas recruitment for social care affect international nurses and social workers in the sector?	<p>The immediate changes outlined in the Immigration White Paper relate to roles below RQF Level 6 (Graduate level) and do not apply to registered nurses, social workers, or other health professionals who meet or exceed this level. Roles which feature on the Immigration Salary List (found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-immigration-salary-list/skilled-worker-visa-immigration-salary-list) remain open pending a review by the Migration Advisory Committee which is due to report in 12 months' time.</p>
What happens to other occupation codes, beyond care and senior care workers, that are below RQF 6 who may be employed in the adult social care sector? For example, registered managers.	<p>Roles which feature on the Immigration Salary List (found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-immigration-salary-list/skilled-worker-visa-immigration-salary-list) remain open pending a review by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) which is due to report in 12 months' time.</p> <p>Details of the MAC's commission can be found here: Letter from the Home Secretary to Professor Brian Bell, 2 July 2025 - GOV.UK</p>
Does the new requirement for a worker sponsored under nursing auxiliary SOC code to be working in a setting with a registered nurse present apply to social care?	<p>Nursing auxiliaries must be working in a setting with a registered nurse present. This can be in a care setting.</p> <p>This SOC code cannot be used to recruit care workers and sponsors who attempt to use the SOC code in this way will face UKVI compliance action.</p>
Will care workers still be allowed to undertake supplementary hours?	<p>Yes, those already in the UK will be able to continue working under their existing visa conditions.</p>
A significant proportion of our workforce are working under other visas (e.g., students on suppl. hours and dependants), do these	<p>The sector can continue to recruit those with general work rights as they do not have restrictions on their employment.</p>



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changes mean we won't be able to employ them after the transition period ends?	There is no change to the rules on employing students on supplementary hours, they can continue to work in the sector in line with the terms of their visa.
Can people on the Health and Care Route switch to other routes?	Yes.
What will happen to CoS and visa applications in progress before 22 nd July?	Visa applications, DCOS and COS assigned before 22 July will be considered in line with the Immigration Rules in place prior to 22 July.
What is the position on self-employed live-in carers?	All international workers need to be sponsored. The immigration system does allow for self-employment; however, sponsors will still need to meet salary thresholds and sponsorship duties.
Will those already here on the social care visa be able to apply to settle after five years, or ten years	The Home Office will consult on the details of the policy later this year. The Home Office will provide details of how the scheme will work after that, including on any transitional arrangements for those already in the UK.
Will the new English language requirement apply to those working in ASC?	More detail will follow in due course.
What happens to the dependants of those switching from other routes when they switch to the care worker route? Can these dependants remain in the UK?	<p>From 11th March 2024, care workers and senior care workers are no longer able to bring dependants to the UK.</p> <p>These changes do not impact care workers and senior care workers and their dependants who were already in the UK before 11th March 2024.</p> <p>Where a care worker or senior care worker was in the route before 11th March 2024, but has not yet brought dependants, they will continue to be allowed to bring dependants during their sponsorship (on this visa).</p> <p>Individuals who are in the UK on any other route, including where that route permits dependants, who switch into the care visa as a care worker or senior care worker will not be able to stay with (or bring over) dependants.</p>
Will the Temporary Shortage List include social care occupations?	No.
Has any risk/impact assessment been made of what might happen if numbers of domestic workers are not sufficient to fill the gap of international workers?	The Home Office has estimated an annual reduction of approximately 7,000 main applicants as a result of ending overseas recruitment for social care visas. This is based on their internal management information for entry visas granted, covering the period of March 2024 to February 2025. This estimate reflects that there was a drop in visa grants of more than 90% compared to the 12 months ending in March 2024,



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	<p>when more than 83,000 entry visas were granted to care workers and senior care workers.</p> <p>An Impact Assessment is being prepared for the Immigration Rules laid on 1st July 2025 and will be published in due course.</p>
<p>Closing the route as a response to exploitation from a minority of providers is disproportionate. Why are you not taking steps to improve the sponsorship system instead?</p>	<p>The care route has seen unacceptable levels of abuse and exploitation including people being brought to the UK where promised work does not materialise or they are being paid significantly less than the required Minimum Salary Threshold, leaving workers at risk of becoming destitute.</p> <p>This scale of compliance action in adult social care is significantly greater than in any other sector eligible for the skilled worker visa. Between July 2022 and April 2025, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) revoked more than 550 sponsor licences, impacting over 43,000 workers in the care sector.</p> <p>UKVI is already undertaking robust checks on sponsor licence and Certificates of Sponsorship applications to ensure only legitimate providers can sponsor workers. Furthermore, UKVI continue to undertake compliance activity to clamp down on abuse of the route and exploitation of workers.</p>
<p>Why is the need for skilled workers in social care not recognised in the same way as the NHS?</p>	<p>The care route has seen unacceptable levels of abuse and exploitation of individual workers.</p> <p>We have taken steps to address these concerns, restricting access to overseas recruitment unless employers have first tried to recruit from the in-country redeployment pool, but the evidence shows more needs to be done.</p> <p>We recognise the scale of reform needed to make the adult social care attractive as a career and are determined to ensure those who work in care are respected as professionals.</p> <p>We are introducing new Fair Pay Agreements for Adult Social Care, implementing the first universal career structure for adult social care, and providing £12m this year for staff to complete training and qualifications. These changes will help attract staff to the sector, providing proper recognition and opportunities for them to build their careers.</p>
<p>How will the Labour Market Evidence Group consider the interests of the health and social care sectors?</p>	<p>The Labour Market Evidence Group will have an ongoing standing function to work together to gather and share evidence about the state of the workforce, training levels and participation by the domestic labour market, including at Devolved Government and regional levels. It will focus on sectors / occupations which are central to industrial strategy, which</p>



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	<p>currently have high levels of reliance on migration for their workforce, or which are anticipated to in future and will make recommendations about sectors or occupations where workforce strategies are needed, or where the labour market is currently failing.</p>
<p>What other measures is the Government taking to support the social care workforce and address recruitment and retention challenges? Will the department publish a workforce strategy?</p>	<p>For a transition period until 2028, in-country applications (including from other visa routes) will continue to be permitted for care workers, provided individuals are already working in the social care sector.</p> <p>This means, for example, that care providers will continue to be able to access students and individuals on the graduate route with existing work rights who we know have provided a vital role in workforce capacity in recent years.</p> <p>The sector can also continue to recruit those with general work rights as they do not have restrictions on their employment.</p> <p>We are already taking action to empower the adult social care workforce through several reforms including expanding the Care Workforce Pathway, the first universal career structure for adult social care. We are committed to developing and increasing the knowledge and skills of everyone who works in adult social care. In September 2024, we launched the Adult Social Care Learning and Development Support Scheme, which allows employers to claim for funding for training courses and qualifications on behalf of eligible staff. The scheme is backed by up to £12m for financial year 2025/26.</p> <p>In addition, we are introducing the first ever Fair Pay Agreement for the adult social care workforce so that care professionals are recognised and rewarded for the important work that they do. Fair Pay Agreements will empower worker representatives, employers and others in partnership to negotiate pay and terms and conditions, helping to address the recruitment and retention crisis in the sector, in turn supporting the delivery of high-quality care.</p> <p>There are currently no plans to publish a social care workforce strategy in response to the Immigration White Paper. However, we are actively supporting the workforce through a range of ongoing initiatives.</p>