

International Recruitment

Bulletin 40
18th December 2025



Season's Greetings!

A Year of Impact Amidst Unprecedented Change



Erica Lockhart MBE, Chair

Now in its third year, our International Recruitment Project has continued to provide vital support to adult social care providers across the South-East during a period of unprecedented change in immigration policy.

Over the last year, the Displaced Worker Sponsorship Scheme has been successfully implemented across the South-East. Through the scheme, 534 providers have completed our quality assurance checks and over 1,500 migrant care workers have been assessed.

An interim evaluation by the International Recruitment Governance Group reports highly positive findings from both provider and worker perspectives.

The project's regional hubs have continued to perform exceptionally well, with delivery already exceeding the original target of 300 placements. To date, **329 Displaced Workers have been successfully placed into new employment.**

Alongside the core scheme, we have delivered wider support for providers, including expert-led legal webinars, a free legal advice line, and regular immigration updates and guidance via the SESCO website.

Act Now: Experienced Migrant Care Workers Available

While we have already placed 329 migrant care workers into new sponsored employment, this represents a mere third of those currently available.

So, if you have full-time vacancies, we can give you access to a pool of experienced care workers, already living in the South-East – many of them car drivers - and available immediately!

Not Yet a Licensed Sponsor?

Support is available to guide providers through the sponsor licence application process and help fast-track recruitment once approved.

£6,000 Funding per Worker

Providers can access up to £6,000 per worker sponsored, significantly reducing recruitment and onboarding costs.

Hurry – Scheme Ends March 2026

With the scheme currently set to end in March 2026, providers are strongly encouraged to come forward with vacancies now.

Alongside the scheme, SESCOA will continue to provide provider guidance, legal support, and training, including further webinars on immigration and compliance. Delivery beyond March 2026 has not yet been confirmed; further updates will be shared in due course.

*Wishing you and those you support
a very peaceful festive period, and
every success in the year ahead!*

“Earned Settlement” Consultation

Overview

As outlined in our previous Bulletin, the Government has announced proposals to introduce an **“Earned Settlement” model**, which would significantly extend the length of time migrant workers must live in the UK before becoming eligible for settlement.

The proposals are open to consultation until **12 February 2026**, with implementation expected from **Spring 2026**. If enacted, adult social care roles could move from the current **five-year route to a 15-year settlement pathway**, leaving tens of thousands of overseas care workers who have arrived since 2022 facing an additional decade of uncertainty and prolonged dependence on sponsorship.

Sector Impact

Since the announcement on **20 November**, the proposals have prompted widespread concern across adult social care. Sector leaders have warned that the changes would **exacerbate workforce shortages**, restrict worker mobility, and significantly **increase sponsorship and compliance costs** for providers.

SESCA Response

SESCA has commissioned **Victoria Buyer**, a specialist health and care sector consultant, to support the development of a formal consultation response. We will also be briefing and encouraging providers to submit their own responses, with further guidance to follow in the New Year. In parallel, SESCO has compiled a list of MPs across the Southeast and will support providers to make direct representations on the likely local impact of these proposals.

Beyond the consultation period, SESCO will continue to develop a **wider advocacy strategy** to influence the narrative around the value, contribution, and long-term sustainability of adult social care.

Provider Briefing Webinar: “Earned Settlement” Consultation

To maximise provider engagement, SESCOA will deliver a **Provider Briefing Webinar** focused on responding to the consultation.

Please hold the date: 2–3pm on 22 January 2026.

Full details and joining instructions will be shared via a forthcoming news post and the SESCOA website.



Have Your Say

With the consultation closing on 12 February 2026, we strongly encourage providers and individuals to submit a response.

[Respond to the consultation \(closes 12 Feb 2026\) >>](#)

[Full SESCOA article >>](#)

Displaced Worker Recruitment Scheme

Supporting Providers to Recruit In-Country Migrant Care Workers



Over 300 Displaced Care Workers Placed into New Employment Already!

Receive £6,000 Funding per Care Worker

Act now – scheme closes March 2026!

How it Works...

We have a large pool of experienced and committed migrant care staff across the South-East – **including car drivers** – who are available immediately.

We'll introduce you to pre-vetted candidates for interview.

For every successful hire, you'll receive **up to £6,000 in funding** to support your recruitment costs.



Don't Miss Out – Apply Now!

For instructions on how to apply, including our grant funding terms:

[**APPLY HERE**](#)

Immigration Skills Charge Increase

Please be aware that as of **Tuesday 16 December**, the Immigration Skills Surcharge (ISC) — a fee payable when a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) is assigned, increased by 32%, as follows:

- **Large sponsors:** £1,000 → £1,320 per year
- **Small or charitable sponsors:** £364 → £480 per year

This was confirmed by the Home Office on 14 October 2025. For detailed guidance, including how to determine whether your organisation qualifies as a large or small/charitable sponsor, visit: [Immigration Skills Charge – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/make-work-pay-immigration-skills-charge)

Employment Rights Bill Consultations Open

As part of the **Make Work Pay Plan**, a number of important public consultations remain open on key measures in the Employment Rights Bill (ERB).

- **Duty to Inform Workers of Right to Join a Union >>>**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/make-work-pay-duty-to-inform-workers-of-right-to-join-a-union>
Closes 11:59pm, 18 December 2025
- **Trade Union Right of Access >>>**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/make-work-pay-trade-union-right-of-access>
Closes 11:59pm, 18 December 2025
- **Enhanced Dismissal Protections for Pregnant Women & New Mothers >>>**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/make-work-pay-enhanced-dismissal-protections-for-pregnant-women-and-new-mothers>
Closes 11:59pm, 15 January 2026
- **Leave for Bereavement (Including Pregnancy Loss) >>>**
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/make-work-pay-leave-for-bereavement-including-pregnancy-loss>
Closes 11:59pm, 15 January 2026

Operating Hours Over the Festive Period

The SE International Recruitment Project (Displaced Worker Sponsorship Scheme) is run by a Central Team and four hub care associations.

Over the Christmas and New Year period, support will be available as follows:

WORKERS

Applications for support will remain open according to the criteria and process set out in this document: [SE ASC IR 24-26 - Support for Workers](#)

There will be no closure of the team working with displaced individuals, but it will take longer to receive a response, potentially up to 5 working days.

As always, workers with a query should contact the person in the project team that they heard from most recently or, for a new application: workforce@sesca.org.uk

PROVIDERS

Providers wishing to apply to join the scheme may do so at any time using this form: <https://forms.gle/bbW83ftyQMr13y6s8>

For providers who are **already assured**, some hubs are closed over this period and your usual contact may not be working; alternative cover is in place as follows:

- **Hampshire Hub** - operating as normal
- **Kent Hub** - closed between Christmas and New Year; queries can be directed to bariah.ir@hampshirecare.org
- **Oxfordshire Hub & Sussex Hub** - will both be operating a skeleton service between Christmas and New Year. Please contact as normal, complex queries may be responded to by another member of the team.

Our **Central Team** will operate over this period; contact sarah.ir@hampshirecare.org.

UKVI

We will continue to submit requests relating to workers recruited from our pool to UKVI, who will be operating on all normal business days, but their response times are also likely to be slower due to reduced hours.

Legal Helpline – Now Live!

FREE Legal Advice from Leading Immigration Specialists

Our FREE legal helpline is now live.

Providers are entitled to a Free 30-minute, no obligation, phone consultation with an immigration specialist at Lester Aldridge Solicitors.

Phone lines are open from 9am-5pm, Mon–Fri (with an answer phone operating outside these hours).



Festive Opening Hours:

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| • Wednesday 24 December 2025: | 9am – 1pm |
| • Thursday 25 December 2025: | Closed |
| • Friday 26 December 2025: | Closed |
| • Monday 29 December 2025: | 9:30am – 4pm |
| • Tuesday 30 December 2025: | 9:30am – 4pm |
| • Wednesday 31 December 2025: | 9:30am – 4pm |
| • Thursday 1 January 2026: | Closed |
| • Friday 2 January 2026: | Closed |

You can also email Lester Aldridge using the dedicated address below.

Phone: 01202 786126

Email: sescahelp@LA-Law.com

The service is open to all CQC-registered adult social care providers operating in the South-East.