

International Recruitment

Bulletin no. 46



Erica Lockhart MBE, Chair

Background

SESCA, in partnership with Southeast ADASS, is leading the 2024/27 International Recruitment project in the southeast, funded by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), to support ASC providers, with two main goals:

Support international care workers impacted by sponsor licence revocations (displaced workers) into new ethical employment.
Support adult social care providers to recruit displaced workers and promote ethical recruitment practices.

PROJECT UPDATE

We are pleased to confirm that the Department of Health and Social Care has approved continued funding for the International Recruitment (IR) project for a further year.

This funding will run through to 31st March 2027 and is expected to represent the final year of the programme.

Recruit displaced international care workers already in the Southeast and receive up to £1,500 per worker, with full support from SESCO.

Funding Arrangements for 2026/27

The financial support offer to providers in 2026-27 has now been agreed, and we are pleased to let you know that a contribution payment towards recruitment costs will be available on assignment of a CoS to a worker introduced to you by a member of our team.

The contribution of £1,500 per worker is available for up to 6 workers per CQC registered location, regardless of how many workers you have recruited through the partnership in previous years.

To qualify for the contribution:

- You must notify us that an offer has been made
- The worker must confirm to us that the offer has been accepted
- You must have assigned a certificate of sponsorship to the worker
- You must submit a grant application including the correct information via the online 26-27 application form

Applications are expected to open approximately mid-June.

Please contact your local hub should you have any queries or vacancies you would like to fill.

Hampshire Hub: Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth, Southampton and Surrey.

Bariah Anjum: bariah.ir@hampshirecare.org

Kent Hub: Kent and Medway

Molly Holt: recruitment@kica.care

Oxfordshire Hub: Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire

Lisa Leah: lisa.leah@oacp.org.uk

Sussex Hub: East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove

Elizabeth Mackie: elizabeth@espice.co.uk

All payments remain subject to available funding and full scheme terms and conditions see full details here: [Funded Support for Providers – SESCO](#)

Ongoing Scheme Activity

- Providers can continue to **apply to join the scheme** (assurance reviews ongoing)
- Assured providers can continue to **recruit from the existing displaced worker pool**
- Workers can still apply; however, **new applicants will not be added to the active pool** until future arrangements are confirmed.

The SESCO team remains in place to support providers with ongoing recruitment activity.

SESCA CONFERENCE 2026



Wednesday 24th June 2026 Sandown Park Racecourse, Esher, Surrey

Our annual conference brings together senior leaders from care providers across the Southeast, alongside local authorities, regional Care Associations and sector partners.

Hear the latest policy developments, share best practice and explore the key challenges facing adult social care.

- Confirmed guest speaker: Prof. Vic Rayner OBE, National Care Forum.
- A full programme, including additional speakers and exhibitors, will be available shortly.
- FREE for registered Adult Social Care providers in the south east.
- Places are limited and expected to fill quickly.

Book your space here:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1987978993685?aff=oddttdtcreator>

LEGAL HELPLINE

FREE Legal Advice from Leading Immigration Specialists

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). 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.

CoS application delays continue

Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) allocation requests can take up to 18 weeks, and the current average processing time is around 12 weeks. Providers should factor this into workforce planning.

The Home Office's CoS Priority Service allows A-rated sponsors to fast-track certain requests to approximately 5 working days. The service costs £350 per request, with only 100 slots available daily, released at 7 am on a first-come, first-served basis. Access remains highly competitive.

We have a route to request that UKVI expedite your applications.

- For Certificates of Sponsorship to be assigned to our displaced workers.
- We can also expedite the worker's visa application once the CoS has been assigned.
- We cannot influence the decision, but your application will be put to the top of a case workers pile.
- There is no charge for this service.

CoS Accuracy Is Critical

Do not apply for 'anticipatory/just in case' CoS. Only apply for those you need, including renewals and new sponsorship requirements.

Renewals:

Provide details of each existing worker you require a CoS for. This should include:

- Full name (as on their passport)
- Date of Birth
- Nationality
- Previous CoS No. if you have it. (If not include any identifying Home Office reference).
- A statement confirming the worker meets the transitional provision for skill level.

For existing workers whose visas need updating, this could read:

All workers are currently employed full-time in genuine roles within our regulated care service and continue to meet Skilled Worker requirements.

For new recruits, something along these lines:

All of the workers were last granted permission as a Skilled Worker to work as a care worker / senior care worker and have had continuous permission since then.

For new recruits, please also include:

Give as much information as you can detailing the reason you require these workers. This could be to replace staff who have left or gone on maternity leave, or to cover increased care packages.

- A letter from your Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) supporting your application is preferred by UKVI. We have a template letter available.
- Clearly detail how many hours each worker will be sponsored for and the rate of pay, i.e. All roles above will be at SOC 6135 with salary £25,000 (£12.82/hr, 37.5 hrs per week) meeting Skilled Worker thresholds.

Tougher UKVI Enforcement

UKVI is taking a significantly firmer compliance stance and is now receiving payroll data directly from HMRC. Underpayment of wages is a common factor in revocation activity. In many cases, sponsors are moving directly to licence revocation without a prior suspension stage.

Accurate reporting, robust record-keeping and timely SMS updates are more critical than ever.

If, for any reason, a worker is not completing enough hours for you to meet the current pay thresholds, this may come to the attention of the UKVI compliance team. We recommend you monitor the pay of sponsored staff closely and seek advice (see below details of the SESCOA legal helpline).

3 Month Rule

Health and Care Worker visa holders transferring between sponsors do **not** need to complete three months' employment before moving.

This requirement applies only when switching from certain other visa routes (for example, student visas).