

International Recruitment

Bulletin no. 48



Erica Lockhart MBE, Chair

Background

SESCA, in partnership with South East ADASS, is leading the 2024/27 International Recruitment project in the southeast, funded by 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.

IMPORTANT IR PROJECT UPDATE

The National Support for International Care Workers who are displaced due to their sponsors licence being revoked is coming to an end.

- The project is funded by DHSC until the end of March 2027.
- We are waiting on instruction as to when we close applications for support from displaced workers but expect this to be the end of December 2026.
- We will continue to support care providers to recruit outstanding candidates from the current pool of displaced workers until the end of March 2027.



Join Lester Aldridge and SESCO for an International Recruitment update for Adult Social Care Providers

An update on current international recruitment and sponsorship issues affecting adult social care providers.

This webinar will cover:

- Recent and proposed changes to the immigration rules – including “earned settlement”
- Compliance and enforcement trends, including common risk areas for sponsors
- Your right to work responsibilities, and the eligibility of workers for supplementary hours
- SESCO Displaced Worker Scheme update – how to sponsor in-country migrant workers and summary of available support funding

Thursday 19 November 2026, 10 – 11.30 am

Book here

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Contribution Payments

Grants (contribution payments) will be available to providers who recruit from the pool of workers until the end of March or until the available funds are depleted, whichever is soonest.

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 2026-27 application form
- [Further information is available here](#)
- [Access the application form here](#)

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.

For full details here: [Funded Support for Providers – SESCO](#)

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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.

Making International Recruitment work for you!

Whilst most placements we make result in a very good working relationship between the employer and the worker, occasionally things do not work out.

The most common theme in these cases appears to be a cultural difference in how some workers communicate. Providers have fed back that some workers they recruited from us struggle because their communication style is very direct.

[We partner with Tresacare](#) to help displaced workers understand and integrate with our culture but some workers who come through our scheme do not always get the chance to engage with this support before they are matched to a new sponsor. Therefore, they may need a little more help when they join you.

This poster is designed to help international workers but can also be used to remind existing staff how you expect them to communicate with your residents and service users.

[View and download the poster here](#)

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Important Update – MFA is being rolled out to protect your SMS



Following recent emails targeting sponsors, UKVI and the Home Office have introduced Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) to your Sponsor Management System (SMS).

This is being rolled out and if you haven't already been informed, please make sure that the contact information in your SMS is correct.

This is the perfect time to ensure that only the people who need access have it and delete off any unnecessary users.

Make sure your primary user contact details are correct

Whilst MFA is being rolled out, please be vigilant and ensure that the email address that any notification came from is a genuine **@gov.uk** address.

If you are in doubt, DO NOT OPEN the email.

[SCAM ALERT: Home Office, UK Visas and Immigration - Digital Care Hub](#)

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Legal Helpline

FREE Legal Advice from Leading Immigration Specialists

A reminder that Care 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 £500 per request, with only 100 slots available daily, released at 7 am on a first-come, first-served basis. Access remains highly competitive.

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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 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.

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- 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 above details of the SESCO 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).

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20-hour supplementary working

A migrant worker should only undertake paid supplementary work if they remain employed by their current sponsor. Once the sponsor notifies UKVI that sponsorship has ended, the worker loses their right to work until they secure a new sponsor.

This position has become more complex because, in some cases where UKVI revokes a sponsor licence, UKVI may allow the sponsor to continue employing the worker until the worker's visa expires.

If you wish to employ a displaced worker part time without sponsoring them, you should confirm that the worker remains employed by their sponsor and that any supplementary work is outside their contracted hours with that sponsor.

- Where possible, confirm the worker's ongoing employment directly with the sponsor and retain written evidence.
- Alternatively, recent payslips showing that the worker remains employed by their sponsor may help demonstrate to UKVI that the worker is being employed lawfully.

Please remember that it is your duty to make these checks and failure to do so may risk your own sponsorship licence.

Worker changing SOC Code

We support care workers who have been sponsored under **Soc Code 6135 - Care Worker** and **6136 - Senior Care Worker**.

We understand that some workers may previously have been sponsored under different occupation codes, including, but not limited to, **6131 - Nursing Auxiliary and Assistant**.

If you meet the strict UKVI criteria to sponsor a worker under this code, you may continue to do so. However, if you wish to sponsor a worker who was previously sponsored under a code other than 6135 or 6136, they will need to complete three months' work with you before sponsorship can proceed.

The rules relating to dependants may also differ, and it is likely that the worker will not be able to continue including their dependants on their visa.

We are working with UKVI on a case-by-case basis, so please contact us if you would like advice on a specific worker's circumstances.



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If you are no longer able to sponsor a worker and need to provide support to help them to return to their home country, the Home Office delivers a support programme.

These slides describe the Voluntary Returns Service and Home Office Reintegration Programme

More information available here

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