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Overseas health professionals

If you're looking at this page you might be thinking about coming to the UK to live and work.

This page sets out information for qualified overseas healthcare professionals, including details about professional registration and immigration requirements.

International recruitment is an option used by many employers in the UK and across the world to try and fill vacancies in certain areas of the country or within professions where there are significant skill shortages.

Currently in the UK, there is a strong focus on increasing overseas nurse supply with lots of opportunities available across the country.

If you are thinking about coming to work in the UK, it is a good idea to read the guidance from the Government [1] which includes information on:

- avoiding scams
- working rights and standards
- what to consider when deciding whether to take a health or care job in the UK
- where to go for further guidance, support or help in the UK

How can I work in the NHS as an overseas health professional?

Anyone from outside of the UK (excluding from the Republic of Ireland) will need permission from UK Visas and Immigration [2] (UKVI) to work in the UK and may also need entry clearance before travelling here.

UKVI is responsible for managing migration. To obtain a visa or entry clearance, you will need to meet certain requirements and demonstrate you have the right to work in the UK via:

- the points-based immigration system
- the EU settlement scheme
- a biometric residence permit

Points-based immigration system

The Home Office (of which UKVI is a part) is responsible for governing the way individuals from outside the EEA can work, train or study in the UK.

A new points-based immigration system [3] was introduced in January 2021. The system provides a route for both EEA and non-EEA nationals to work, train or study in the UK if they meet the eligibility criteria.

This points-based system has largely replaced the previous tiered system. It applies to everyone from outside

of the UK who wishes to live and work here, apart from people from the Republic of Ireland and individuals who were already in the UK by 31 December 2020.

While there is currently no cap on the number of skilled UK migrants allowed to enter the UK, they must meet the skilled worker criteria [4] to apply to live and work here. A Health and Care Worker visa [5] allows health and care professionals to come to or stay in the UK to do an eligible job with the NHS, an NHS supplier or in adult social care.

Applications are assessed using a points system that is intended to only allow entry to those whose skills will benefit the UK. The number of points required, and the way the points are awarded, depend on the category under which individuals apply, but reflect:

- a job offer
- skill level
- language competence
- qualifications
- other set criteria

Some occupations are recognised by UKVI on the national immigration salary list (this has replaced the shortage occupation list). Occupations on this list have a lower minimum salary requirement than the usual rate for the skilled worker or health and care visa routes. The immigration salary list can be found on the gov.uk website [6].

You are advised to check the website to establish which route of entry you are eligible to apply for.

EU settlement scheme

The EU settlement scheme provides EU nationals and people from the EEA and Switzerland with a route to residency in the UK.

If you or your family are from the EU, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein, you can apply to the scheme if you or a family member were living in the UK by 31 December 2020. You must also either:

- meet one of the criteria for a later deadline to apply
- have ‘reasonable grounds’ for not applying by 30 June 2021

See the gov.uk website [7] for up-to-date information.

If you are a Turkish national, you may benefit from the European Community Association Agreement (ECAA) with Turkey. The agreement provides Turkish nationals, who are already working legally in the UK, with certain rights when they need to extend their stay. If you meet the criteria set by the UKVI you will be issued with a vignette in your passport and receive a letter confirming your status. For further information, visit the UKVI website [8].

Biometric residence permits

Issued to foreign nationals, a biometric residence permit [9] (BRP) is a card which holds your biographic details (name, date and place of birth), your 'biometric information' (fingerprints and digital facial image), and shows your immigration status and your entitlements while you are in the UK.

Individuals are issued a BRP automatically when they apply for a visa or immigration. A sticker or vignette, valid for 30 days, is issued in passports, allowing enough time to travel to the UK. On arrival, you will have ten days to collect your BRP from a post office branch, as specified in your decision letter.

As part of recruitment practice in the NHS, verification of identity checks are used to determine that an identity is genuine and that it belongs to the individual presenting it.

BRP cards can be used to verify identity and complete this check.

Individuals may also choose to use their BRP card to sign up to the Home Office's online portal [10] to share their right to work with an employer. Through this service an individual can generate a share code to send to employers to prove their immigration status.

To apply for a biometric residence permit, you will be required to provide biometric information (fingerprints and digital facial image), which are checked against existing records and then stored on the UKVI system and on the microchip biometric card.

If you are applying for a BRP from the UK, you can enrol your biometric information:

- by appointment at one of the UKVI's premium service centres or biometric enrolment centres
- at a number of post offices nationwide which offer a walk-in-service without the need to book an appointment

Further information about biometric residence permits is available on the gov.uk website [9].

Where can I find information specific to my profession?

We have developed information unique to specific healthcare professionals from overseas:

- allied health professions [11], for example radiographers, podiatrists, paramedics and physiotherapists
- dentists [12]
- doctors [13]
- healthcare scientists [14], for example biomedical scientists and audiologists
- midwives [15]
- nurses [16]
- pharmacists [17]

If you are an international medical graduate or doctor from outside the EEA, you can apply for, and take up employment in, training posts that may qualify for sponsorship under a skilled worker visa [4]. You can find more about these employment opportunities on the NHS Jobs website [18].

Source URL:https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/working-health/overseas-health-professionals

Links
[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-for-health-and-social-care-jobs-in-the-uk-from-abroad [2] https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration
[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-immigration-system-what-you-need-to-know
[4] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/new-immigration-system-what-you-need-to-know#skilled-workers
[5] https://www.gov.uk/health-care-worker-visa [6] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/skilled-worker-visa-shortage-occupations [7] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/status-of-eu-nationals-in-the-uk-what-you-need-to-know [8] https://www.gov.uk/turkish-worker [9] https://www.gov.uk/biometric-residence-permits [10] https://www.gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status [11] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/allied-health-professionals/information-overseas-allied-health-professionals

[12] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/dental-team%20/information-overseas-dentists
[13] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/information-overseas-doctors
[14] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/Explore-roles/healthcare-science/information-overseas-healthcare-scientists [15] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/midwifery/information-overseas-midwives
[16] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/information-overseas-nurses
[17] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/pharmacy/information-overseas-pharmacists
[18] http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/doctors/