



# Health and Care Worker visa

## Contents

- [Overview](#)
- [Your job](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/your-job \)](/health-care-worker-visa/your-job)
- [If you'll need to meet different salary requirements](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/different-salary-requirements \)](/health-care-worker-visa/different-salary-requirements)
- [Knowledge of English](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/knowledge-of-english \)](/health-care-worker-visa/knowledge-of-english)
- [How much it costs](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/how-much-it-costs \)](/health-care-worker-visa/how-much-it-costs)
- [Documents you'll need to apply](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/documents-you-must-provide \)](/health-care-worker-visa/documents-you-must-provide)
- [Apply from outside the UK](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/apply-from-outside-the-uk \)](/health-care-worker-visa/apply-from-outside-the-uk)
- [Your partner and children](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/your-partner-and-children \)](/health-care-worker-visa/your-partner-and-children)
- [Extend your visa](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/extend-your-visa \)](/health-care-worker-visa/extend-your-visa)
- [Update your visa if you change job or employer](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/update-your-visa-if-you-change-job-or-employer \)](/health-care-worker-visa/update-your-visa-if-you-change-job-or-employer)
- [Switch to this visa](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/switch-to-this-visa \)](/health-care-worker-visa/switch-to-this-visa)
- [Taking on additional work](#)  
[\( /health-care-worker-visa/taking-a-second-job \)](/health-care-worker-visa/taking-a-second-job)

## Overview

A Health and Care Worker visa allows medical 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.

# Eligibility

## Your job

To qualify for a Health and Care Worker visa, you must:

- be a qualified doctor, nurse, health professional or adult social care professional
- work in an eligible health or social care job
- work for a UK employer that's been approved by the Home Office
- have a 'certificate of sponsorship' from your employer with information about the role you've been offered in the UK
- be paid a minimum salary - how much depends on the type of work you do

[Check if your job is eligible \(/health-care-worker-visa/your-job\).](#)

You must have a confirmed job offer before you apply for your visa.

## Knowledge of English

You must be able to speak, read, write and understand English. You'll usually need to [prove your knowledge of English \(/health-care-worker-visa/knowledge-of-english\)](#) when you apply.

## If you're not eligible for a Health and Care Worker visa

You may be eligible for [another type of visa to work in the UK \(/check-uk-visa\)](#).

## How long you can stay

Your visa can last for up to 5 years before you need to extend it. You'll need to apply to extend or update your visa when it expires or if you change jobs or employer.

## If you want to stay longer in the UK

You can apply to extend your visa as many times as you like as long as you still meet the eligibility requirements.

After 5 years, you may be able to [apply to settle permanently in the UK \(/settle-in-the-uk/y/tier-2-general-visa-or-skilled-worker-visa\)](#) (also known as 'indefinite leave to remain'). This gives you the right to live, work and study here for as long as you like, and apply for benefits if you're eligible.

## How to apply

You must apply online.

How you apply depends on whether you're:

- [outside the UK \(/health-care-worker-visa/apply-from-outside-the-uk\)](#) and are coming to the UK
- inside the UK and [extending your current visa \(/health-care-worker-visa/extend-your-visa\)](#)
- inside the UK and [switching from a different visa \(/health-care-worker-visa/switch-to-this-visa\)](#)

If you want to change your job or employer, you must [apply to update your visa \(/health-care-worker-visa/update-your-visa-if-you-change-job-or-employer\)](#).

[Your partner and children \(/health-care-worker-visa/your-partner-and-children\)](#) may be able to apply to join you or stay in the UK as your 'dependants'.

## How long it takes

You can apply for a visa up to 3 months before the day you are due to start work in the UK. This date is listed on your certificate of sponsorship.

As part of your application, you'll need to prove your identity and provide your documents.

You may need to allow extra time if you need an appointment to do this. You'll find out if you need one when you start your application.

## Getting a decision

Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks.

You may be able to pay to [get a faster decision \(/faster-decision-visa-settlement\)](#).

If your application is successful, your [decision email \(/apply-to-come-to-the-uk/getting-a-decision-on-your-application\)](#) will tell you what you'll get to prove

your immigration status and what you need to do next.

## How much it costs

You, your partner or children will each need to:

- pay the application fee
- prove you have enough personal savings

[Check how much money you'll need \(/health-care-worker-visa/how-much-it-costs\).](#)

## Healthcare surcharge

You - and your partner or children - will not have to pay the healthcare surcharge.

You can start using the NHS for free from the date your visa starts.

You'll still need to pay for some services, such as prescriptions, dental treatment, eye tests and assisted conception.

## What you can and cannot do

You can:

- work in an eligible job
- [take on additional work \(/health-care-worker-visa/taking-a-second-job\)](#) in certain circumstances
- study
- bring [your partner and children \(/health-care-worker-visa/your-partner-and-children\)](#) with you as your 'dependants', if you meet the eligibility criteria
- travel abroad and return to the UK
- apply to settle permanently in the UK (also known as 'indefinite leave to remain') if you've lived in the UK for 5 years and meet the other eligibility requirements
- do voluntary work

Any voluntary work you do must be unpaid and for one of the following:

- a [registered charity \(/find-charity-information\)](#)
- a voluntary organisation

- an associated fundraising body (an organisation that raises money for a charity or voluntary organisation)
- a statutory body (a government-appointed body, for example Historic England)

You cannot:

- apply for most benefits ([public funds \(/government/publications/public-funds-2\)](#)), or the State Pension
- change jobs or employer unless you update your visa

If your application is successful, you'll get a full list of what you can and cannot do with a Health and Care Worker visa.

→ **Next**  
Your job (/health-care-worker-visa/your-job)

[View a printable version of the whole guide \(/health-care-worker-visa/print\)](#)



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