



UK Visas
& Immigration

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Health and Care Visa Guidance

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This guidance is intended to provide information on the Health and Care Visa. The Health and Care Visa is part of the Skilled Worker Visa.

As the Health and Care Visa currently forms part of Skilled Worker, anyone wishing to apply for the Health and Care Visa must meet all of the requirements for the relevant route. For further information see paragraph 4 of this guidance.

This guidance comes into force on 22 July 2025.

HEALTH AND CARE VISA

1. The Government committed to introducing a ‘Health and Care Visa’ for qualified doctors, nurses and allied health professionals who have been trained to a recognised standard and who have good working English. The scope of the visa was extended to include eligible persons working in the social care sector. The benefits for such workers are fast-track entry, reduced visa fees and dedicated support to come to the UK with their families. People applying for the Health and Care Visa, and their dependant family, are exempt from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge. This offer forms part of the Skilled Worker route. **The Health and Care Visa was launched on 4 August 2020.**

Eligibility

2. The Health and Care Visa is available to the following individuals:

- A person applying under the Skilled Worker route for Entry Clearance or Leave to Remain; and,
- A person taking up a job in one of the occupations specified within the list of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes set out in paragraph 3; and,
- A person who will be employed or engaged by:
 - i. An NHS Foundation Trust in England, an NHS Trust in England, the Care Quality Commission, Health Education England, Health Research Authority, Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority, Human Tissue Authority, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, NHS Blood and Transplant, NHS Business Services Authority, NHS Digital (the Health and Social Care Information Centre), NHS England (the NHS Commissioning Board), NHS Improvement (Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority, NHS Resolution (the NHS Litigation Authority or UK Health Security Agency, a Local Authority or Clinical Commissioning Group; or
 - ii. A local Health Board in Wales, Health Education & Improvement Wales, Public Health Wales, The Welsh Ambulance Service or Velindre NHS Trust; or
 - iii. A Health Board or Special Health Board constituted under section 2 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978, Common Services Agency for the Scottish Health Service (established under Section 10 of that Act), Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (known as the Care Inspectorate) established under Section 44 of the Public Services (reform) (Scotland) Act 2010 or Scottish Social Services Council established under section 43 of the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001; or

- iv. A Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service, Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency, Northern Ireland Medical and Dental Training Agency, Northern Ireland Practice and Education Committee, Northern Ireland Social Care Council, Patient and Client Council, Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-Being (the Public Health Agency), Regional Business Services Organisation, Regional Health and Social Care Board or Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority; or
- A person who is employed
 - a) To provide, or to support the provision of, regulated activities as prescribed in Schedule 1 (read with Schedule 2) to the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014 (S.I. 2014/2936), and who is also employed or engaged by an institution or organisation registered with the Care Quality Commission and which is currently carrying on a regulated activity; or
 - b) For the purposes of an establishment or agency in Wales regulated under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000; or
 - c) For the purposes of a service regulated under Part 1 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016; or
- A person who is employed or engaged by a party to:
 - a) A general medical services contract to provide primary medical services, or an agreement for the provision of primary medical services under section 50 of the NHS (Wales) Act 2006; or
 - b) A general dental services contract to provide primary dental services, or an agreement for the provision of primary dental services under section 64 of the NHS (Wales) Act 2006; or
- A person who:
 - a) Is providing care services as defined in section 47(1) of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 and registered under that Act; or
 - b) Is employed or engaged by an organisation registered with Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland; or
 - c) Is, or who is employed or engaged in connection with the provision of services under the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 by, a party (other than a Health Board) to: - an arrangement to provide services under section 2C of that Act; - an agreement to provide services under section 17C of that Act; - a contract to provide services under section 17J of that Act; or – an arrangement to provide services under section 25, 26 or 27 of that Act; or
- A person who is employed or engaged by a General Practitioner Federation or by any entity with which the Northern Ireland Regional Health and Social Care Board has a contract or an arrangement under the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972 to provide Family Practitioner Services; or

- A person who is employed or engaged by a body registered with, or monitored or inspected by, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority; or
 - A person employed or engaged by, or registered with, one of the following organisations: General Chiropractic Council; General Dental Council; General Medical Council; General Optical Council; General Osteopathic Council; General Pharmaceutical Council; Health and Care Professions Council; Northern Ireland Social Care Council; Nursing and Midwifery Council; Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland; Scottish Social Services Council (under the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001) or Social Care Wales, or
 - A person employed by an organisation registered with the CQC and which is currently carrying out a regulated activity. Adult social care services means any services which an English Local Authority must or may provide or arrange to be provided under:
 - a) Section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983 – (After-care)
 - b) Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 (Care and Support).
3. The Health and Care Visa will apply to the following list of Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes:
- 1171: health services and public health managers and directors
 - 1232: residential, day and domiciliary care managers and proprietors
 - 2113: biochemists and biomedical scientists
 - 2114: physical scientists
 - 2211: generalist medical practitioners
 - 2212: specialist medical practitioners
 - 2221: physiotherapists
 - 2222: occupational therapists
 - 2223: speech and language therapists
 - 2224: psychotherapists and cognitive behaviour therapists
 - 2225: clinical psychologists
 - 2226: other psychologists
 - 2229: therapy professionals not elsewhere classified
 - 2231: midwifery nurses
 - 2232: registered community nurses
 - 2233: registered specialist nurses
 - 2234: registered nurse practitioners
 - 2235: registered mental health nurses

- 2236: registered children's nurses
- 2237: other registered nursing professionals
- 2251: pharmacists
- 2252: optometrists
- 2253: dental practitioners
- 2254: medical radiographers
- 2255: paramedics
- 2256: podiatrists
- 2259: other health professionals not elsewhere classified
- 2461: social workers
- 3111: laboratory technicians
- 3212: pharmaceutical technicians
- 6131: nursing auxiliaries and assistants

For in-country applicants, their job can also be in one of the following SOC codes. If the applicant is applying to switch from another route, they must have already been working legally in their job with their sponsor for at least the 3 months ending on the date their certificate of sponsorship was assigned:

- 6135: care workers and home carers
- 6136: senior care workers

For applicants applying to extend their permission or change employment, and who got their certificate of sponsorship for their first Tier 2 or Skilled Worker visa before 22 July 2025, and who have continually held one or more Skilled Worker visas since then, their job can also be in one of the following SOC codes:

- 1231: health care practice managers
- 3211: dispensing opticians
- 3213: medical and dental technicians
- 3219: health associate professionals not elsewhere classified
- 6132: ambulance staff (excluding paramedics)
- 6133: dental nurses

This is an exhaustive list - applicants must be taking up a job in one of the above occupations to be eligible for the Health and Care Visa.

4. In addition to the requirements set out in this guidance, applicants for the Health and Care Visa will need to meet all relevant criteria for a Skilled Worker. These requirements are set out in the Immigration Rules at Appendix Skilled Worker and Appendix Skilled Occupations, including:
 - A requirement for applicants to work for a UK employer that's been approved by the Home Office
 - Applicants with Certificates of Sponsorship for occupation codes "6135 – Care workers and home carers", and "6136 – Senior Care Workers" must work for a CQC regulated employer. Where an applicant has already been issued a visa to work for an employer which is not registered with the CQC, under the rules in place before 11 March 2024, they can extend their permission with the same employer.
 - Where an applicant is switching to this route as a care worker or senior care worker, they must have already been working legally in their job for their sponsor for at least 3 months.
 - Where an applicant, who originally applied before the rules changed, moves to another sponsor, the new sponsor will need to meet the CQC requirement.
 - A requirement to have a 'certificate of sponsorship' from their employer with information about the role they've been offered in the UK
 - A requirement to do a job that's on the list of eligible occupations
 - A requirement to be paid a minimum salary - how much depends on the type of work the applicant does
 - A requirement to be able to speak, read, write and understand English at the required level.
 - Transitional arrangements

These requirements are contained in this guidance and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/health-care-worker-visa>

Employer requirements

5. The employer will be required to include a brief explanation in the Certificate of Sponsorship setting out how the employee meets the Health and Care Visa eligibility requirement set out in paragraphs 2 and 3. The employer will also be responsible for informing the applicant they are eligible for the Health and Care Visa so the applicant can correctly complete the visa application form. Where an employer is an organisation that provides services commissioned by the NHS, evidence of the contract arrangements with the NHS may need to be provided to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) as proof that applicants are eligible to apply for a Health and Care Visa.

Visa fee reduction

6. Individuals applying for the Health and Care Visa will apply using the normal Skilled Worker application form and, assuming their employer has confirmed how the employee is eligible, the applicant will check the box to confirm they are applying for the Health and Care Visa.

Health and Care Visa applicants will pay the reduced application fees. All visa application fees, including for the Health and Care Visa, can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visa-regulations-revised-table>. Once they have completed all the relevant information, the application process should automatically route Health and Care Visa applicants to the payment page where the appropriate fee will be applied.

7. The visa fee reduction applies to partners and dependants of Health and Care Visa applicants. Partners and dependants of Health and Care Visa applicants should therefore also tick this box.
8. You should not tick the Health and Care Visa box if your employer has not confirmed on the Certificate of Sponsorship that you are eligible. Where an application is made, but the applicant does not appear to meet the conditions, that application may be rejected (as the correct fee will not have been paid). If you are unsure you should check with your sponsor before completing the application.
9. If you are applying as a partner or dependant of a person who qualifies for the Health and Care Visa, but the qualifying person arrived in the UK before the Health and Care Visa was available, then you will need confirmation from the sponsor that the person upon whom your application is reliant, is eligible for the visa. The sponsor will need to provide the information, which would normally be included in the Certificate of Sponsorship, to the applicant for inclusion in the partner or dependant application. This should be in the form of a letter or an email from the sponsor and would set out the organisation and, if not an NHS body, how the organisation qualifies under paragraph 2 of this guidance.
10. If you are sponsored in SOC code 6135 – Care workers and home carers, or 6136 – Senior Care Workers, you will be unable to include your partner or dependant in your visa to come to or stay in the UK. This restriction does not apply to Skilled Worker or Health and Care visa holders who had visas issued for applications submitted before 11 March 2024 and have since held continuous permission in the route, or if the dependent is a child born in the UK.
11. In addition to the reduced visa fee, applicants applying for the Health and Care Visa, and their family are exempt from having to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge. Family is defined as the partner or dependant child of the person applying for the Health and Care Visa. It does not cover wider family or those living independently of the health and Care visa applicant.

Fast-Track entry

12. UKVI will prioritise Health and Care Visa applications, with the aim that the vast majority are processed within three weeks from the point the applicant has provided their biometric information. This is in comparison to the current timeframe for visa processing of between eight and twenty weeks.

Dedicated NHS support and visa processing team

13. In addition to the reduced fee, there is dedicated support available, enabling Health and Care Visa sponsors to contact UKVI's specialist team if they have any issues with the application process or eligibility for the health and Care Visa. Sponsors can contact UKVI's dedicated NHS team at the following email address: UKVINHStteam@homeoffice.gov.uk