

Guide for Migrants Working in the UK Social Care Sector



Who is this guide for?

This guide is for migrant workers in the UK social care sector. It aims to help you navigate immigration and employment challenges with clear information and practical advice.

This guide offers information about:



What to do if your Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) is revoked



Debunking some common myths about visas



Steps to switch to a new sponsor or visa



Access to healthcare



Common barriers when looking for work



Links to organisations that provide advice and support



Losing your Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)

If your employer loses their sponsorship licence or withdraws or revokes your CoS, you should receive a 60-day grace period to find another sponsor or leave the UK.

What you can do:

- Check any correspondence from the Home Office carefully and keep all paperwork and emails as evidence!
- Seek advice immediately from an OISC-registered immigration adviser. To find a registered adviser near you, use the [Immigration Advice Authority \(IAA\) Adviser Finder](#). Immigration advisers do not make decisions about a person's immigration status, but they are able to provide correct information and can help you fill in forms. All immigration advisers must be registered with the IAA or be a member of an approved professional body.
- If you want to seek legal help, there are organisations that specialise in immigration. You can find solicitors in your area who can provide immigration advice through the [Immigration Law Practitioners Association](#).

Access the IAA Adviser finder.

Select 'Not Fee Charging' from the drop down menu on the right for a list of advisers who offer free services.

Access the Immigration Law Practitioners Association's finder.

Tick the box Legal Aid / Free Advice for a list of advisers who can offer free help.

- Start looking for a new job with an approved sponsor. This can be challenging but support is available. The government has set up a network of [Regional Hubs for Displaced Adult Social Care Workers](#). These Hubs can help to match workers who have lost their CoS with a new employer that can sponsor them. Get in touch with the Hub in your region and they will be able to tell you how to access their support, what help they offer and how it works. You can find a list of the hubs, and their contact details, online.

If you need support with Internet access, ask at your local library or look for a Digital Inclusion Hub in your area.

More information:
[goodthingsfoundation.org/
find-support](https://goodthingsfoundation.org/find-support).

Click here and scroll down to find the contact details for a Regional Hub for Displaced Workers in your area.



Looking for a switch – Navigating the process

If you want to switch to a new sponsor, you should:

- Confirm that your new employer is a licenced sponsor before you start the process of switching your visa. You can do this by going to the [UK Government website](#), downloading a list of licenced sponsors and searching for your employer's company name. You can also ask your employer for their sponsor licence number and search for that on the register. If you already have a Certificate of Sponsorship, it should show your employer's sponsor licence number.
- Update your visa and get a new Certificate of Sponsorship via [the UK Government website](#) within the Home Office timelines. You should apply before your current visa or CoS expires, or before the 60 day grace period, if your employer's licence has been revoked. The Home Office says that when your applications has been received, it can take 3-8 weeks to be processed. But note that if there are any mistakes or discrepancies, it can take longer.

Click here and follow links on the website to download a register of licenced sponsors. After downloading the register, you can use the search function to look for your employer.

Access information to help you with the switch process and for information about visa conditions.

Tips:

- Start looking as soon as you are aware your current sponsorship may end.
- Use official sources and trusted advisers to avoid scams. You can approach your nearest Regional Hub for Displaced Workers for support with finding a new job – see above.
- Clarify job requirements and hours of work before accepting offers.
- Seek language and skills support through community organisations in your area.
- Understand your visa's work conditions fully. This information can be found on the gov.uk website (see QR code above).
- Keep copies of all applications and correspondence!





Challenges when finding work

You might face these challenges when trying to find work:

- Some employers require a driving licence before giving you a job. If you have an International Driving Licence, you may have to pass a test within 12 months of living in the UK to obtain a UK Driving Licence, or you will not be legally allowed to drive. It can take several months to obtain a UK licence and we recommend planning ahead. Ask your employer if they can provide any support.
- **Limited work hours or job types allowed by your visa.** If you are on a Health and Care Worker visa, you will only be allowed to work in the health and care sector. You are allowed to work an additional 20 hours for a second employer (not your main sponsor). Some employers request a proof that you are working the full contracted hours with your main employer/sponsor before offering you the extra 20 hours.
- Many people experience cultural shock after arriving to the UK and need a period of adjustment. It is important to understand that this is normal and you are not the only person that finds it difficult to adjust to a life in the UK. Local networks and migrant organisations can help find local network and support. If you need some support with mental health, you can get reach out to your local community hubs and migrant organisation. Some organisations have dedicated helplines that offer mental health support, including Mind and Samaritans – see last page for contact details.
- **Gender based roles may be a challenge for male carers looking for work.** You should be aware that depending on your location, jobs may be limited because of higher requests for women carers.





Can I switch to a different type of Visa?

You may be able to switch to a different type of visa:

- Skilled Worker visa
gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa
- Student visa
gov.uk/student-visa
- Family/partner visa:
gov.uk/uk-family-visa
- Asylum
You should only apply for asylum if you fear persecution and can provide evidence. There has been an increase in asylum refusals by the Home Office and the government is pushing to increase deportations of people, whose asylum applications have been refused. In some cases, the process of applying for an asylum can take years, and most asylum seekers are not allowed to work.

Always seek advice from registered immigration advisers. Visa switching is complex and mistakes can affect your rights and your ability to remain in the UK. Some visa types do not allow your partner or children to apply as dependants.



Mythbusting

Is it easier to get a visa if you are married?

Marriage does not guarantee a faster visa approval. Being married to someone that you do not know well can have serious implications on your visa and financial status and on your future ability to get married.

Marriage solely to gain a visa can be considered fraudulent and visa applications require evidence beyond marital status.

Healthcare

If you have paid the healthcare surcharge with your visa application and your visa allows you to stay in the UK for more than 6 months, you are entitled to free NHS treatment in England. You will need to pay additional charges for things like prescriptions and dental treatment.

In case of emergency, you can visit A&E services for free, emergency healthcare is free up until being admitted to hospital or given an outpatient appointment.

Some family planning services are also free. If you are pregnant and working, you are entitled to attend your healthcare appointments and your employer should not prevent you from attending your pregnancy check-ups.



Support is available. Some useful contacts.

If you are experiencing exploitation or abuse, you have rights and there is help:

- For information about your rights in the workplace, get in touch with **ACAS**.
Website: [acas.org.uk/](https://www.acas.org.uk/)
Telephone helpline: 0300 123 1100
- You can get advice about a range of issues, including debts, applying for benefits or housing, and other issues, from **Citizens Advice**.
Website: citizensadvice.org.uk
- For union support, get in touch with your local **UNISON** branch.
Website: unison.org.uk/about/contact/
- You can report exploitation or mistreatment at work to the **Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority**.
Website: gla.gov.uk/contact-us
Telephone: 0800 432 0804
- If you are experiencing exploitation, you can get in touch the **Modern Slavery and Exploitation Helpline**.
Website: modernslaveryhelpline.org/
Telephone: 08000 121 700
- **Mind** offers mental health support and information about welfare benefits.
Website: mind.org.uk/
Infoline: 0300 123 3393
- **Samaritans** have a 24 hour helpline for people in need of mental health support.
Website: samaritans.org/
Free Helpline: 0116 123
- **Tulia** specialises in immigration advice and holistic support for migrants.
Website: tulia.org.uk/
- **Seraphus** offer fixed-fee immigration services
Website: seraphus.co.uk/personal-immigration/

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For any feedback on this guide or advice on how you may disseminate it as an organisation please contact m.dolezalova@leeds.ac.uk.

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