



Yorkshire and Humber International Recruitment Project

Updates for Care Providers and Partners March 2026

1. An update on the project

The UK Government has extended funding into a **4th year (2026/27)** to support displaced international care workers move into new sponsored roles.

Though this is good news, the funding available has reduced by 60%. The criteria for its use continues to prioritise the matching of workers displaced by revocation into new care roles, and therefore the Yorkshire and Humber International Recruitment Project will continue to connect displaced migrant workers with **ethical, sustainable jobs** in the care sector, recognising the essential skills they bring and their role in meeting rising demand. So far in YH we have matched over 675 displaced workers to vacancies with new sponsor providers.

2. 2026/27 Minimum sponsored salary threshold for care workers

The usual annual increase in minimum sponsored salary threshold has **not** been applied by the Home Office (Government) for April 2026, whilst the Government seeks evidence through the MAC (Migration Advisory Committee) as to what future thresholds should be.

Therefore, the current minimum threshold of £25,000 annual salary and £12.82 per hour for every hour worked applies (NB. The new National Minimum Wage is £12.71 from April 2026).

So, what do I need to pay the care workers I sponsor?

Any worker with a Certificate of Sponsorship issued **on** or **after** April 2025, must be paid the minimum sponsored salary threshold of £25,000 annual salary **and** £12.82 per hour for every hour worked.

For example:

30 hours at £12.90 per hour (£20,178 per annum salary) is **NOT** compliant

37 hours at £12.71 per hour (£24,519 per annum salary) is **NOT** compliant

40 hours at £12.71 per hour (£26,507 per annum salary) is **NOT** compliant

For any worker with a Certificate of Sponsorship issued **prior** to April 2025 (last year) must be paid the National Minimum Wage at £12.71 from April 2026.

Remember when you renew, extend or issue a new CoS, it is the minimum sponsored salary threshold on that date that applies, or the current National Minimum Wage - whichever is higher.

Don't just be compliant prove that you are!

As The Home Office gains information directly from HMRC regarding the payment of workers can you prove that on every payslip to every sponsored worker that you meet the required salary threshold.

Does your payslips show:

1. Pay in every pay period meets the minimum pay requirements for every hour worked in that pay period (as set out above).
2. Where the care worker is paid monthly (or less frequently), wages paid over a 3-month period must be at least $\frac{1}{4}$ of the annual required salary i.e. $\frac{1}{4}$ of £25k.
3. Where the care worker is paid weekly (or the pay period is otherwise less than monthly), wages paid over any 12-week period must be at least $\frac{12}{52}$ of the annual required salary.
4. Where the care worker will not work the same hours each week and this results in uneven pay, you will need confirm to the Home Office that the working pattern and wages over any 17-week reference period will be at least $\frac{17}{52}$ of the annual required salary.

Also, make sure that you don't fall foul of unlawful deductions, or unpaid leave and unpaid travel time that could result in your failure to meet your salary thresholds. This also applies to your domestic workforce in relation to national minimum wage.

2. Increase in sponsor revocations

The Home Office has reported a record number of sponsor licence revocations, with 1,948 licences revoked between July 2024 and June 2025—more than double the previous year's total.

This rise reflects the government's intensified focus on strengthening immigration compliance. UKVI has increased enforcement activity through more frequent compliance visits, enhanced data-sharing, and intelligence-led investigations.

As part of strengthening compliance, UKVI can now receive specific PAYE payroll information from HMRC, which gives them direct evidence of whether sponsored workers are being paid the required salary thresholds - a minimum of at least £25,000 annual salary and at least £12.82 per hour for every hour worked, routinely and consistently.

Common breaches leading to licence revocation include failing to provide the promised work, underpayment, unpaid leave and weaknesses in record-keeping.

The government's commitment to holding employers' accountable means that any organisation with a sponsor licence is at risk if they do not meet minimum salary and eligible role requirements, regardless of sector.

At **Yorkshire and Humber International Recruitment Fund**, we are here to support employers in understanding and meeting their sponsorship responsibilities. Organisations are encouraged to review the guidance on www.yhir.co.uk or contact their **local hub** for guidance, training, and practical support.

For further information on recent enforcement activity, see: *Record numbers of visa sponsor licences revoked for rule breaking* – [Record numbers of visa sponsor licences revoked for rule breaking - GOV.UK](#)

To help sponsors strengthen their internal processes, a **self-assessment tool** is available to support compliance in sponsorship: [Help for Adult Social Care Employers – Sponsoring Workers > NY Resourcing](#)

3. Probation and Trial Periods with sponsorship.

Providers and partners are reminded that it is **unlawful** to offer a displaced international worker full-time hours—whether framed as a trial, induction, or probation—without first securing the appropriate sponsorship.

Where an employer wishes to engage a migrant worker before sponsorship is in place, they must first check the workers existing right to work and permissions. The worker must already hold a visa that provides a valid right to work, any hours offered must comply fully with the limitations of that visa, and all employment arrangements must meet UK employment law, including National Minimum Wage and salary requirements.

If the worker is currently working on a skilled worker visa and working for another employer, it is the hiring providers responsibility to check that they are still working for the sponsored employer. If their sponsored employment has ceased, they cannot be employed legally without being sponsored, even on supplementary hours.

If you are able to engage a worker ahead of sponsorship, and decide to proceed as their sponsor, the Certificate of Sponsorship must be based on a confirmed offer of a role that meets minimum salary requirement for Health and Care Skilled Workers, meets eligibility criteria and has a clear start date, and any pre-sponsorship work must be covered by a separate contract appropriate to the visa conditions. Maintaining these standards protects both the organisation and the worker and ensures full compliance with immigration and employment regulations. - [Checking a job applicant's right to work - GOV.UK](#)

4. Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) Allocation

Applying for CoS - get it right the first time.

We understand that some applications for Certificates of Sponsorship are experiencing delays, with a number being denied. These outcomes are often linked to incomplete information, missing evidence, or requests from the Home Office for more information to allow them to progress an application.

We can support you in preparing or supplying such information when it is needed.

As the standard Home Office processing time is **up to 18 weeks**, we strongly advise submitting applications as early as possible, ideally 6 months prior to the date you require them to avoid disruption to recruitment plans.

For further guidance on sponsoring a skilled worker, see [Sponsor guidance-part-2-sponsor-a-worker-03-26-v1.0.pdf](#)

For navigating the Sponsor Management System, see [Sponsorship: guidance for employers and educators - GOV.UK](#)

Renewing your annual CoS allocation:

The Home Office Guidance states:

1. Your CoS allocation will need to be renewed each year while your licence is valid.
2. Any CoS that remains unused at the end of your CoS year will be removed from your SMS account.
3. You cannot carry over any unused CoS to the next CoS year.

4. At the end of your CoS year, you will either:
 - receive an automatic allocation for the following CoS year equal to the number of CoS you assigned during the previous CoS year
 - must make a 'manual' request via your SMS account for a further allocation (also known as a 'follow-on' allocation)

Automatic annual allocation:

Automatic annual allocation is the Home Office's system for giving licensed sponsors a set number of undefined Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) each year without requiring a fresh application. This allocation is reviewed annually and is designed to ensure sponsors can continue assigning CoS for eligible roles throughout the year without interruption. The system sits within the Sponsorship Management System (SMS), where sponsors can view their allocation, track usage, and request increases when needed.

1. You will receive an automatic annual allocation if all the following are true:
 - your licence is A-rated
 - your current annual CoS allocation is marked as 'active' in your SMS account
 - you are licensed on an eligible route, or routes
2. An 'eligible route' is any Worker or Temporary Worker route; there are exceptions however these do not affect Skilled Workers.
3. If you are eligible for automatic renewal, you will receive an annual allocation equal to the number of CoS you assigned during the previous CoS year.

It is encouraged for Sponsors to check whether the above is true and advise that 3 months before your CoS allocation date, to contact UKVI and find out if your allocation will be automatic.

5. E-Visas

All migrant workers who have not yet registered for an E-visa should do so without delay. An E-visa is a digital record of:

- A worker's identity and immigration status - for example the type of visa they have or if they have indefinite leave to remain (settlement) in the UK
 - the conditions of their status - for example if they're allowed to work or study in the UK
- E-visas are replacing physical immigration documents.

E-visas are digital immigration status records that staff can access and share online, and managers play a significant role in helping workers understand how to use them confidently.

Providers should ensure managers know how to guide staff through viewing and proving their status, updating personal details, and recognising what documents are no longer issued in physical form. Clear, proactive communication from managers helps prevent confusion, reduces the risk of workers losing access to employment or services, and supports a smoother onboarding and compliance process for both new and existing international recruits. [eVisa support videos - GOV.UK](#)

6. Sponsorship fees briefly explained

UK employers must hold a sponsorship licence to employ overseas workers and the Home Office have now announced the new sponsorship related fees applicable from April 2026:

Fees category	Current fee	Fee from 8 April 2026	Fee change
The expedited processing of a sponsorship management request made by a Worker sponsor or Temporary worker sponsor	£350	£350	£0
Priority service for expedited processing of sponsor licence applications	£750	£750	£0
Worker sponsor licence (large sponsor)	£1,579	£1,682	£103
Worker sponsor licence (small sponsor)	£574	£611	£37
Skilled Worker - Health and Care Visa - where a certificate of sponsorship has been issued or approval to sponsor under Sponsor a Worker has been given for three years or less - main applicant and dependants	£304	£324	£20
Skilled Worker - Health and Care Visa - where a certificate of sponsorship has been issued or approval to sponsor under Sponsor a Worker has been given for over three years - main applicant and dependants	£590	£628	£38

[Home Office immigration and nationality fees, 8 April 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

The worker sponsorship licence fee is £611 (increased by £37) for small or charitable sponsors and £1,682 (increased by £103) for medium or large sponsors. Also when sponsoring a worker on the Health and Social Care Visa, employers must cover:

- Immigration Skills Charge: £1,320 per year (risen from £1,000 in Dec 2025).
- Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) fee: £525 per certificate. Buying a multi-year CoS is more cost-effective than renewing annually.

Employers must not recover any CoS fees, admin costs, or legal fees from workers. Doing so normally results in licence revocation. If legal representatives are used, their costs also cannot be passed to workers.

Workers pay for their own visa unless the employer chooses to cover it. They must never be required to take or pay for legal advice. Health and Social Care Visa holders are exempt from the Immigration Health Surcharge.

6. Reminder of Bursary Support

In the Yorkshire and Humber region we can offer bursaries to providers who commit to employ and sponsor a displaced care worker, whilst funding is temporarily available. Given the reduction in project funding, we are reviewing how long this fund is available for and/or whether the Bursary could be increased in line with the increased fees (they are currently held and detailed below).

How to apply for a Bursary: please contact the individual you have been working with who has introduced displaced workers to you, or if unsure the hub in your relevant subregion, using the email address below:

Humber East Riding, Hull, North Lincs, & North-East Lincs	Makecarematter@northyorks.gov.uk
North Yorkshire York and North Yorkshire	Makecarematter@northyorks.gov.uk
South Yorkshire Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham, & Sheffield	YHIRSouthYorkshire@sheffield.gov.uk
West Yorkshire Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds, & Wakefield	YHIRWestYorkshire@bradford.gov.uk

For those operating across areas, please contact the area where you have the most provision of care.

Available for Certificate of Sponsorships paid for/assigned from 16th December 2025 – whilst funding is available.

Size of Employer	Issued 1 yr Certificate of Sponsorship	Issued 2 yr Certificate of Sponsorship or more
Small	£1,005	£1,485
Large	£1,845	£3,165

Evidencing Bursary Claims

The project currently seeks to reimburse costs for a 1- or 2-year sponsorship period and encourages employers to consider longer sponsorships where possible.

To ensure bursary funding is allocated fairly and in line with project criteria, we require clear evidence of sponsorship. This includes:

- Confirmation of the sponsor's size
- Transaction confirmation email (recipient, date & cost included)
- Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) up to and including the personal information section.

The YHIR project will ensure that Providers claiming bursaries meet sponsorship requirement in line with Home Office guidance, for example that workers are being paid the correct rates and are employed fairly and equitably in line with statutory employment requirements. The bursaries are an added benefit to support providers in the Yorkshire and Humber region with sponsorship costs; however, they are not an entitlement and will only be accessible whilst funding remains available, which is currently being reviewed.

Contacts and Information: This newsletter is produced by the Yorkshire and Humber International Recruitment project team. For further advice and resources from the project, please visit our dedicated website: [Yorkshire and Humber Regional International Recruitment Hub > NY Resourcing](#)