



Department
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Dame Meg Hillier MP
Public Accounts Committee
House of Commons
London, UK
SW1A 0AA

Dear Chair,

Public Accounts Committee hearing: Access to Urgent and Emergency Care, 3 July 2023

During the recent hearing, I set out the steps the Government is taking to support the social care workforce, including our work to support providers to make use of international recruitment to address issues with capacity. I committed to write to the Committee on this point, and specifically set out further detail on visa requirements to recruit care workers and senior care workers from overseas.

In February 2022, the Government made care workers eligible for the Health and Care Visa and added them to the Shortage Occupation List. Senior care workers were added to the list of eligible occupations for the Health and Care Visa in January 2021. There have been over 57,600 entry clearance visas granted for care workers and senior care workers in the year ending March 2023. This reflects strong uptake of international recruitment in the care sector since workers were made eligible for the Shortage Occupation List.

The Skilled Worker route (which includes the Health and Care Visa) sets out skill, English language and salary thresholds which must be met in order for candidates to have their visa granted.

Specifically, for care workers and senior care workers this means:

- candidates are required to pass a Secure English Language Test, administered by an approved provider;
- candidates must also demonstrate their suitable skill level for taking up a role in care by passing the interview stage with their prospective employer, and having valid job offer;
- candidates are also required to provide a criminal record certificate from their country of origin.

Providers must also ensure that international recruits are paid the minimum salary of £20,960 per annum or £10.75 per hour, depending on which is higher. The minimum salary is based on a 37.5 hour week but the minimum salary will be higher if the individual is contracted to work more hours. The minimum salary requirement helps to drive positive employer behaviour and practice and protect the welfare of people, recruited internationally, who come and work in the social care sector – a view shared by the independent Migration Advisory Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Style

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