

Rule changes to make it easier to recruit health and care staff

Foreign workers in key health and care roles will have a greater opportunity to come to the UK following changes announced to the Immigration Rules.

Pharmacists, laboratory technicians, senior care workers and nursing assistants are among roles that have been added to the [Shortage Occupation List](#), which gives people in these roles an advantage in obtaining a skilled worker visa.

Health services and public health managers and directors, residential, day and domiciliary care managers and health professionals not elsewhere classified, such as audiologists and dental hygiene therapists, have also been added to the Shortage Occupation List, as have modern foreign language teachers.

It ensures that businesses and public services across the UK can get access to the best and brightest talent from across the world.

The changes build on the government's delivery of the new points-based immigration system, which works for the whole of the UK.

Minister for Future Borders and Immigration Kevin Foster said:

Every year we welcome healthcare workers from across the world to our United Kingdom, with many having played a key role on the frontline of the NHS during the recent pandemic. This latest set of changes, combined with our Health and Care Visa, will ensure they can easily get the immigration status they deserve.

As part of the points-based immigration system, people applying to come to the UK through the skilled worker route must reach 70 'points' to be eligible for a work visa.

A job on the Shortage Occupation List is worth 20 points. Combined with the mandatory criteria – having an acceptable standard of English, an offer from a licensed sponsor and the required skill level, which are worth 50 points – will ensure people in these roles reach the 70 points necessary.

The changes follow a review published by the independent Migration Advisory Committee last year. While the government has accepted some of the MAC's recommendations, it is not making wider changes to the list while the long-term economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is still uncertain.

This is part of a number of changes made under the Immigration Rules. Others include:

- Confirming the Graduate route will launch from July 1;
- Updating the Skilled worker visa going rate to include a minimum hourly rate to safeguard against employers who may require employees to work longer hours to make up for the lower rates of pay;
- [Replacement of the current Intimidation Policy with the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy](#); and
- Further building on the world-leading Global Talent route to automatically endorse recipients of international awards, including the Nobel Prize, to qualify for a visa, with more prizes to be added later in the year.

The government also unveiled plans to launch another new immigration route that will help start-ups and fast-growing firms recruit the talent they need to innovate and grow at yesterday's [Budget](#) as part of a range of measures for highly skilled migrants. As part of the route, highly skilled migrants with a job offer from a recognised high-growth firm will qualify for a visa without the need for sponsorship or third-party endorsement.