

UK to strengthen its ethical approach to the international recruitment of health and care workers

- The updated code of practice (CoP) sets out how UK health and social care employers can ethically recruit from overseas
- The CoP will help to meet UK's target of delivering 50,000 more nurses by 2024

The UK has updated its code of practice for the international recruitment of health and social care staff to align with the World Health Organization (WHO), widening the global market from which the UK can ethically recruit.

This will provide increasing numbers of international staff with the opportunity to come and work in the UK's health and social care sectors to deliver world-class care.

The CoP sets out how the UK can work collaboratively with governments from around the world, forming partnerships to benefit health and social care workers, their country of origin and the UK.

The updated CoP aligns with the principles set out in the WHO's global code of practice and represents an important step forward in the UK's approach to ethical recruitment.

It will:

- ensure international recruits will be treated fairly and be provided with the appropriate support
- provide safeguards against active recruitment from 47 countries on the WHO Health Workforce Support and Safeguards List
- set out how the UK is supporting countries with the most pressing health and social care workforce challenges

Together with robust plans to increase UK-trained nurses, an increase in health and social staff from overseas will help to meet the government's manifesto commitment for 50,000 more nurses by 2024. There are already over 10,500 more nurses working in the NHS compared with last year.

Minister for Care Helen Whateley said:

I am hugely grateful for all of the frontline health and social care workers from overseas who have worked tirelessly to save lives and provide the best possible care during this pandemic.

We will work with countries all over the world to promote the best standards of ethical recruitment of health and social care staff and I look forward to welcoming more incredible talent to the UK.

Alongside our ambition to increase the number of UK-based nurses, this will allow us to continue to deliver world-class care to patients for years to come.

International recruitment is one part of the [Long Term Plan](#) to ensure the NHS has the staff it needs. This will help to achieve a sustainable health and social care workforce to meet the UK's needs and will ensure better healthcare can be delivered to everyone.

Homegrown supply of health and social care staff is increasing through a range of government measures which includes more training, retaining more staff and encouraging those who have left to return.

The CoP clearly sets out responsibilities for recruiters, employers and the government on how to maintain ethical recruitment on an ongoing basis and will ensure countries with the weakest health systems are protected.

Read the [updated code of practice](#).

To align with the WHO, the new code refers to the WHO Health Workforce Support and safeguard List, 2020 of 47 countries where active recruitment can't be undertaken. This replaces the previous UK-held list of 152 countries, and removes confusion which can arise from the UK holding a separate list of countries. UK recruiters are not permitted to actively recruit from these countries unless there is a government to government agreement in place for managed recruitment.

These countries are:

- Afghanistan
- Angola
- Bangladesh
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Congo
- Congo, Democratic Republic of
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Djibouti
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Gambia, The
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Haiti

- Kiribati
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Micronesia, Federated States of
- Mozambique
- Nepal
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Pakistan
- Papua New Guinea
- Senegal
- Sierra Leone
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Sudan
- Tanzania, United Republic of
- Togo
- Uganda
- Vanuatu
- Yemen, Republic of