



WM SOCIAL CARE

• International Recruitment •

International Recruitment Bulletin

Issue Number: 4 June 2024

WHAT'S NEW

In last month's E-Bulletin, we announced that the Department of Health and Social Care has introduced the 2024-2025 International Recruitment Fund for the adult social care sector. This phase focuses on assisting international recruits affected by license revocations.

Currently, we're in the Discovery Phase, building on Phase One learnings and exploring solutions for 2024/25, including a nationally evaluated Displaced Workers Trial.

As Phase One of the International Recruitment Project concludes, the evaluation shows we have established a strong foundation through regional collaboration and there is some useful support now in place. The West Midlands Social Care International Recruitment Hub will also continue to share new resources, support, and best practices over the coming months.

Stay tuned for updates over the next couple of months through your Local Authorities and Care Associations. Meanwhile, check out some of the activity that has been taking place at a local level, learnings from Phase One and the new support resources available below.

YOU ASK, WE ANSWER

LEGAL & HR HELPLINE

SUPPORT EXTENDED

FREE Legal & HR Support – extended until Sep 2024

For the past six months, we've worked in partnership with Lester Aldridge Solicitors to offer free Legal and HR support through our helpline and webinars. These are designed to help West Midlands Care Providers and Local Authorities with international recruitment.

Originally set to end in June, the helpline will now remain open until September 2024. Contact our team with any questions.

**30 minutes FREE Legal & HR Advice until
30th September 2024: 01202 786107**

We'll also run three legal webinars. You'll receive dates and topics through your Care Association or Local Authority and via the IR Hub, so watch this space.

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Your input is needed!

Help shape the next phase of the international recruitment project

Your input is invaluable in helping us shape the next phase of the International Recruitment (IR) Project for the West Midlands to ensure that the funding is utilised in the most impactful way.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey – closing date 16th July 2024.

COMPLETE OUR SURVEY NOW



NEW compliance guidance coming soon...



We are excited to announce that a new compliance guidance document, developed by Lester Aldridge Solicitors, will soon be available on the West Midlands Social Care International Recruitment Hub. This guide is specifically designed for care providers who are currently sponsoring or wish to sponsor overseas workers in the UK.

The guide offers a comprehensive summary of your obligations and duties to comply with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations. It provides detailed advice on best practices for adhering to Right to Work requirements and step-by-step instructions for preparing for UKVI compliance audits.

Given the dynamic nature of immigration law, we recommend regularly consulting the latest updates on the West Midlands International Recruitment Portal or seeking further specialist legal advice to stay informed of any changes.

For more about becoming a sponsor or understanding your sponsorship duties, you can contact our FREE legal and HR helpline, run by Lester Aldridge Solicitors, until the end of September 2024: 01202 786107

Stay tuned via the IR Hub for the Compliance Guide release.



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LOCAL GRANT PROJECTS

How the West Midlands is addressing challenges in International Recruitment for adult care providers

Through meetings and events with care providers and local authorities, we have gathered insights to understand the current landscape when it comes to international recruitment and challenges faced on the ground. These include everything from the delays care providers are experiencing in processing sponsorship applications to the cost of car insurance for international recruits.

This feedback has been shared with the Department of Health and Social Care (DoHSC) and has helped identify several common challenges. In this article, we share some of the things being done across the region to tackle these challenges.

Sponsorship licences revoked or applications returned

From our discussions with care providers who have had their licenses revoked, and with legal teams, it appears that one of the main reasons for license revocation is simple administrative errors.

We have run a series of legal webinars to support care providers with this process and highlighted some of the common issues. We also have a free legal and HR helpline, run by Lester Aldridge Solicitors – this has been extended until the end of September 2024, so please do reach out to the team if you need some support: 01202 786107

Also, our new compliance guidance document will soon be available on the West Midlands Social Care International Recruitment Hub. This guide offers a comprehensive summary of your obligations and duties to comply with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) regulations and so much more.

Helping displaced workers find employment

The challenge of placing displaced international recruits is substantial and as we move into the discovery phase of the 2024/25 project this is where the Government wants much of the focus to be.

Looking ahead, the commissioners recommend appointing an international recruitment representative for each council to coordinate efforts and monitor recruitment in the local area. This role would work with other leads across the region to build a regional and sub-regional infrastructure, further supporting international recruitment and stabilising the care market, particularly for services commissioned through personal budgets.

Coventry and Warwickshire's initiatives have not only stabilised the local care market but also provided crucial support to international recruits, ensuring they can continue contributing effectively to the adult social care sector.

This work will help us develop local approaches across the region as we move forward with Phase 2 of the IR Programme.

Learnings from Coventry & Warwickshire

In our second E-Bulletin, we discussed the positive steps Coventry and Warwickshire have taken to support international recruits.



Working with community organisations, including local churches and faith groups, has been crucial to the project's success. This support has been as much about helping recruits settle into the area and adapt to the local way of life as it has been about finding employment.



The commissioners also took practical steps like organising job fairs to match ethical care providers with international recruits, helping many displaced workers find new employment opportunities.

[Read more about the work in Coventry and Warwickshire here](#)



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Learnings from Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Local Authorities are also working, together with Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), to support displaced workers.

They found international staff were accessing CAB for support and uncovered heart-breaking stories, as some international staff had not been receiving a salary or been given the appropriate quality of accommodation.

Representatives from the local authorities, the CAB, and Partners in Care (Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin) convened together with a small group of supportive ethical employers and designed their initiative.

The aim was to provide a guaranteed interview for displaced workers. If the workers did not have the necessary skills, they would be supported to develop the necessary skills to qualify them for employment in the care sector.



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council



Of the 29 individuals that have contacted CAB to indicate that they have been displaced, CAB are currently supporting 12 people. Three have successfully been placed with new employers and sponsorships, with a further nine individuals currently being supported into employment.

The ethical employers have indicated that there is a significant challenge at present in getting certificates of sponsorships to employ the displaced workers, with waiting times increased to 16 weeks with the Home Office.

We have provided feedback to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC).

International Recruitment: Displaced Individuals Register

In the last E-Bulletin, we also mentioned the creation of the Displaced Individuals Register by WMCA, in collaboration with WM ADASS and local authorities, aims to address this issue. This register will help match displaced social care workers with vacancies, preventing the risk of deportation and ensuring valuable workers remain within the sector.

The Displaced Individuals Register is poised to become a vital resource, enabling care providers to connect with local authorities and identify suitable candidates for vacancies. This proactive approach helps mitigate the risk of deportation and keeps the workforce stable.

West Midlands Care
Association

Visit the International Recruitment
Displaced Individual's Register

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Cultural integration

There have been lots of discussions among care providers and local authorities around the need for more cultural awareness. This need manifests in two significant areas:

1. Supporting international recruits as they adapt to new cultural environments
2. Ensuring that colleagues are informed and free from prejudice

Firstly, cultural awareness is crucial for helping international recruits adjust to their new surroundings. Moving to a different country often involves navigating unfamiliar social norms, workplace expectations, and communication styles. By fostering an environment that values cultural awareness, organisations can provide better support to these recruits, easing their transition and enhancing their overall experience.

Secondly, cultural awareness is essential for creating an inclusive workplace where all employees feel respected and valued. When colleagues are educated about different cultures, it reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings and prejudice.

Awareness programmes and diversity training can promote empathy and understanding, helping to break down stereotypes and encourage positive interactions. This not only benefits the individuals involved but also contributes to a more harmonious and productive work environment.

There is lots of great work already happening across the West Midlands. This includes:

Buddying support scheme

WMCA has been administering a Buddying Support Scheme covering the local authority areas of Birmingham, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton, and Worcestershire.

Buddying involves allocating a member of staff (or several) who acts as a friendly point of contact to the recruit outside of the formal management and HR structure. The buddy is there to give practical advice on how things work in the UK and to be someone the new recruit can turn to for informal advice.

Barriers to setting up successful buddying schemes are mainly knowledge of what a buddying scheme entails and lack of time amongst staff to act as buddies. WMCA's project addresses both these issues by making online resources available on practical advice on setting up a buddying scheme.

Backed up by a weekly webinar for the duration of the project. Providers were also able to apply for a small cash grant of £1,200 pounds to go towards staff backfill costs or other costs associated with buddying.

[For more information click here](#)

Cultural awareness and training

Staffordshire and Stoke local authorities are working in collaboration with Staffordshire Association of Registered Care Providers (SARCP) to support care providers through the provision of culturally sensitive training, and information, advice and guidance, to support international recruits to successfully settle into their employment and local community.

Workshops have been held for care providers and this has highlighted the need for ongoing support to SME care providers to understand the legal and regulatory requirements for international recruitment.

They are creating an information, advice and guidance pack specific for their region, providing local employees and employers with local terminology and information about food in the region. The aim is to help them navigate the local area in order to have a better idea of what to expect and settle in, everything from how to register with a GP, what things cost and where the local shops are.



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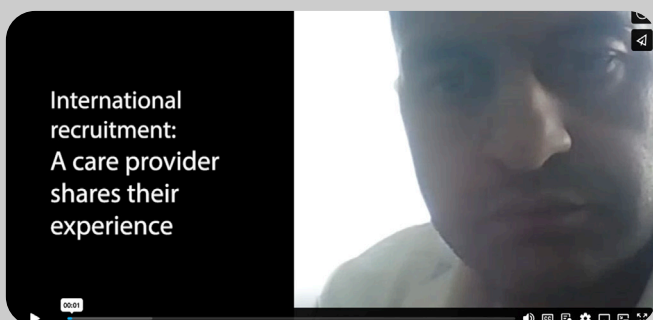


Spotlight on International Recruits in West Midlands Care Providers

We have heard some fantastic stories about our international recruits. With 37% of the West Midlands care providers holding active International Recruitment sponsorship licences, we thought it was important to share some of these stories.

We spoke with two of Solihull's main domiciliary care providers: Social Care Academy, which delivers services for children, young people, and adults, and Nationwide Care Services which has 11 branches across the Midlands.

Nationwide Care Services employs 1,300 staff, of which 300 are international recruits. Waheed Azam, Operations Director, shared his experience of international recruitment. He said, "Prior to international recruitment, we had to hand back care hours to local authorities due to the lack of staff. Since recruiting internationally, we have been able to provide 100% of all packages against the care frameworks they have with local authorities."



[WATCH THE FULL VIDEO HERE](#)

Norman says, "I wanted to find a job where I can manage to get a better salary to send my kids to school. I had established a career in chemistry back home, but it appeared as if it wasn't paying me very well, and I decided to change my career completely. I decided to embark on this new career in care in the UK."

After speaking with Social Care Academy, Nationwide Care Services, and their international recruits, it is clear that without carers like Cynthia and Norman, people across the community would not have received the care they need over the last few years. We also learned that to ensure international recruitment is done to the ethical standards required, most care providers who are SME's, require resources to access the HR and legal advice and support, in the same way as some of the large care providers.

Waheed also highlighted the positive response towards international carers, who can cater to people of different ethnicities. He said, "The qualifications and the experience that international carers have brought to the service is of a higher standard. They were able to understand a lot more in terms of complex care because a lot of the international staff that do apply are physiotherapists, doctors, and nurses."

We also spoke with International Recruits who have found their move to adult social care in UK to be positive and have expressed their ambitions within social care.

Here, we speak to International Recruits, Cynthia and Norman, who offer sound advice to other international recruits and share their aspirations for the future:



[WATCH THE FULL VIDEO HERE](#)

Our FREE Legal & HR helpline is available to West Midlands based Care Providers and Local Authorities until the end of September 2024: 01202 786107

There is a real need to support International Recruits

It's clear international recruits add real value to our sector and there are some amazing examples of this across our region. But we need to ensure the right support is in place, as this story demonstrates.

[WATCH THE FULL VIDEO HERE](#)

This video shares the story of one international care worker who became known to Coventry City Council. It highlights the need for support.



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