

Sponsorship Management Focus: Covering the Sponsorship Management System (SMS) and Right to Work

On 7th March 2024, we held a webinar on Sponsorship Management, covering key topics such as:

- Reporting changes for your organisation
- Reporting changes affecting your staff
- Requesting changes to licence details
- Requesting a Certificate of Sponsorship allocation increase
- Applying for and assigning a defined Certificate of Sponsorship
- How to report worker activity

Below, we've compiled some of the most frequently asked questions on Sponsorship Management, gathered both from our helpline and during the webinar.

1. What is the average time for a Certificate of Sponsorship to be approved once applied for?

The target time period is one day. However, it is regularly taking longer than this, and has taken up to several months in some rare cases. The time period will depend on whether you are applying for a defined or undefined Certificate of Sponsorship (Certificate of Sponsorship), the workload of the caseworker that the request is allocated to and the amount of supporting documents that they require.

Expedite your Certificate of Sponsorship: You can contact your Local Authority and ask them to submit a letter of support to UKVI. Please note, the letter of support to help speed up Certificate of Sponsorship applications is optional and is not an endorsement, nor does it guarantee UKVI will accept the application. DASSs can decline to provide a letter of support if they do not have sufficient information, or if they cannot assure themselves that the number of Certificate of Sponsorship applied for is reasonable.

2. Is a new Certificate of Sponsorship required when a worker changes job role with the same company but different Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code? For example, senior care worker to a registered nurse.

Yes, you will need to issue a new Certificate of Sponsorship if someone is changing to a role with a different SOC.

3. When a Certificate of Sponsorship is assigned and immigration skills charge paid, is there an ongoing cost involved annually?

No, you will be required to pay the immigration skills charge up front for the period that the visa is being granted for.

4. Where should you report long term sickness?

If a sponsored worker has been absent from work for more than four weeks in total in any calendar year on reduced pay (such as Statutory Sick Pay), you should report this via the 'Report Migrant Activity' function in the SMS.

5. Once you have submitted your annual allocation request, can you amend/update if necessary?

Yes, you can apply for an increase to your allocation of Certificate of Sponsorship if you need to sponsor more workers.

6. Can you use the home office website to check right to work?

Yes, you can do a Right to Work check using an individual's share code here: [Check a job applicant's right to work: use their share code - GOV.UK](#)

7. How do you cancel a Certificate of Sponsorship?

If the sponsored worker has stopped working for you, or didn't start working for you after the Certificate of Sponsorship was issued, you should notify UKVI via the 'Report Migrant Activity' function in the SMS. This will trigger the process for the Certificate of Sponsorship to be cancelled.

8. If you recruit overseas staff on sponsorship, do online checks have to still be carried out using share code?

You must carry out Right to Work checks on any individual that you intend to employ, no matter their circumstances. You can do this either by carrying out manual checks on physical documents, or online checks using a share code.

9. When a worker obtains indefinite leave to remain, does that free up the allocation of Certificate of Sponsorships?

Yes, if the worker no longer requires sponsorship to live and work in the UK because they have indefinite leave to remain, you no longer need to sponsor them.

10. When you cancel a sponsorship for a migrant, roughly how long does the process take to be changed on SMS system?

This will depend on the workload of the case worker that this is assigned to. This process can take several months.

11. How can you add an additional work address/branch for a staff member? Especially if they work between two branches.

If you need to add a new branch to your sponsorship licence, you should do this via the 'Request Changes to Licence Details' function on the SMS.

12. How do you ensure your Home Office, refund for a Certificate of Sponsorship and ISC charges comes through when an assigned Certificate of Sponsorship expires, or visa is denied?

A refund for ISC charges will be processed automatically by UKVI when they cancel the Certificate of Sponsorship. This can take several months. There is no refund due for a Certificate of Sponsorship application fee.

13. How would we change a sponsored employee's working hours on the system. i.e. contract change in hours?

You can do this via the 'Report Migrant Activity' function in the SMS and by selecting the appropriate option in that menu.

14. Are right to work checks necessary for all current employees who have been employed for more than 10 years with you?

You should carry out Right to Work checks for all employees. If you have employees that have been employed since the requirement was introduced in 1996 without checks being carried out, you should arrange for checks to be carried out retrospectively and self-report to the Home Office.

15. How often do we need to do a right to work check for dependants, students and sponsors. How often do we check for NON -EU right to work?

You should undertake a fresh Right to Work checks before an individual's time limited Right to Work permission expires, or if you consider that there may be circumstances in which the individual's Right to Work has been curtailed.

16. How many days of unpaid annual leave are the staff allowed in a year?

This will depend on the terms of your employment contract, but you will need to make a report to UKVI via the 'Report Migrant Activity' function in the SMS if an employment is absent without pay for more than 4 weeks in total in a calendar year.

Additional International Recruitment Related Support

You can find lots of advice and guidance via our [International Recruitment Hub](#). We'd also like to signpost you to:

- **HR & Legal Webinars**

If you are a Care Provider in the West Midlands and would like details about our future International Recruitment Human Resources & Legal Webinars, please email our team at hello@wmca.international

- **Legal & HR Advice**

If you need additional legal support please reach out to Lester Aldridge, who have been contracted to provide support until the end of September 2025: <http://irwestmids.co.uk/hr-legal-services-support/>

- **Recruitment & Immigration Support**

Free sponsorship licenses and funding for recruitment and immigration support

Lifted, a Technology platform and expert immigration team, have been commissioned to help Care Providers recruit and retain sponsored workers who are already here in the UK, as part of the International Recruitment Programme 2024/25.

[You can find out more here.](#)