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• International Recruitment •

International Recruitment Bulletin

Issue Number: 5 January 2025

The 2024-25 International Recruitment Programme is now well and truly underway. Within this E-Bulletin we provide an update in terms of the support now available for both Care Providers and displaced International Care Workers.

The Programme is being funded via the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) International Recruitment Fund. The Programme, launched in 2023, aimed to help care providers tackle recruitment challenges and strengthen safeguards to protect international care workers from exploitation.

In 2024-25, our focus is to support international care workers affected by unethical practices or employer sponsorship revocations.

CQC-registered care providers operating in the West Midlands will benefit from:

- Compliance support to navigate regulations
- HR and legal guidance.
- Access to a pool of qualified work-ready international care workers.

Displaced international care workers will have access to vital support including:

- Employment and legal support.
- Access to an online self-serve support platform - this includes CV tips, signposting to job sites, training and much more.
- Signposting to guidance on visa and sponsorship processes, along with platforms to report unethical practices and seek resolution.

YOU ASK, WE ANSWER

LEGAL & HR HELPLINE

SUPPORT EXTENDED

FREE Legal & HR Support for Care Providers & Local Authorities

As part of the Regional Programme, Lester Aldridge Solicitors will continue to provide free Legal and HR support through our helpline and webinars.

If you are a Care Provider or Local Authority, based in the West Midlands, and have an international recruitment related question please email our team

WMIRHelpline@ia.law.com

**30 minutes FREE Legal & HR Advice until
the 30th September 2025**

We'll also run monthly legal webinars. We have included dates of these below and you will receive more information via your care association and/or local authority so watch this space.



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Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) Applications

Did you know?

You may be able to speed up your CoS application

We have had good feedback from Local Authorities who have used the new process to support care provider's Certificate of Sponsorship applications, in a bid to try and quickly secure sponsorship for displaced international care workers.

How Local Authorities Can Help with CoS Applications

1. Assess CoS application information from providers using the provided UKVI checklist, which includes verifying contracts and ensuring that CoS requests are reasonable.
2. Submit a letter of support to UKVI once satisfied with the provider's application.

Please note, the letter of support to help speed up CoS applications is optional and is not an endorsement, nor does it guarantee UKVI will accept the application.

- If you are a Care Provider please contact your Local Authority for more information or email us at hello@wmca.international



Monthly HR & Legal Webinar Series: For Care Providers & Local Authorities

The rollout of e-Visas & what they mean for care providers: 5th December 2024

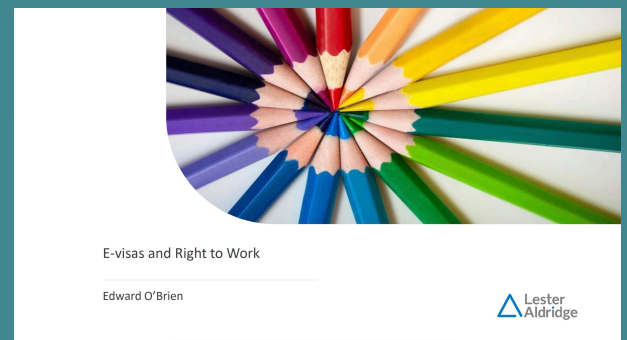
Almost 100 professionals from Care Providers and Local Authorities in the West Midlands attended our first live legal webinar of the 2024-25 Programme, which focused on preparing providers for the rollout of e-Visas.

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) is replacing physical immigration documents with digital immigration status (eVisas).

The aim is to go fully digital by 2025, with most biometric residency permits expiring at the end of December 2024.

Edward O'Brien, Senior Associate, at Law Firm Lester Aldridge explained that international care workers will need to log into their UKVI account – once they have registered they will be provided with a Share Code. Care Providers can then use this to carry out right to work checks.

We will share more information about our future webinars via the Care Associations and Local Authorities.



Please email hello@wmca.international to access the recording.

You can also find guidance about e-Visas on the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/online-immigration-status-evisa>

Regional Support for Displaced International Care Workers, Living in the West Midlands

As part of the 2024-25 International Recruitment Programme, we are working closely across the West Midlands to ensure we support displaced International Care Workers. Here we share some of the ways we are doing so, in addition to the Local Authority Enhanced Support Offers.

Accessing Support

As part of the Programme we have created and manage a Regional Mailbox for displaced international care workers, living in the West Midlands.

After running a pilot we opted to have one central regional Mailbox which is now run by our delivery partner, West Midlands Care Association.

We have a clear plan to contact to all international care workers who were displaced before the 2024-25 programme began – this kicked off in November and we expect to have offered the option of support to all care workers displaced by the end of December 2024.

Displaced International Care Workers, living in the West Midlands, are being directed to www.revoked.support - they are asked to fill out a short form and provide some information to help us identify what support they require.

This includes sign posting them to the relevant Local Authority Enhanced Support Offers and directing to the Regional self-service platform, My UK Life. We share more about this below.

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West Midlands International Recruitment Partnership

Support Request

If you have been informed by UKVI that your employers sponsorship license has been revoked and you need additional support finding re-employment, please use the contact form below and we will do our best to support you

Please note this service is only for individuals living within the West Midlands Region.

If you are living in another area, please use the contact details stated on the letter you have received from UKVI.

Displaced International Care Workers, living in the West Midlands, can access supported by filling out a short form at:
www.revoked.support

Self-Serve Platform for International Care Workers

We have launched a new self-serve platform, My UK Life, for International Care Workers, based in the West Midlands.

They can enhance their skills and connect with their community through our platform.

1. Features include CV tips, virtual coach, training, sign posting to job opportunities, and community-building resources.
2. They can access this by registering at <https://ai.myuk.life/wm/>
3. Local Authorities and Care Providers, across the West Midlands, can promote My UK Life with ready-to-use posters designed to inform care workers about the platform and its benefits:
 - a. Short version My UK Life promotional brochure: https://ai.myuk.life/wp-content/uploads/WM-Social-Care_myUKlife-Service-Broch_Short.png
 - b. Long version My UK Life promotional brochure: https://ai.myuk.life/wp-content/uploads/WM-Social-Care_myUKlife-Compact-Broch.png

Empowering International Care Workers

Get free support online!

- 24/7 AI Coaches for International Care Workers
- Personalised Toolkits
- Local & National Services
- 24/7 Access to Information

ai.myuk.life/wm



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Legal Support for International Care Workers

Legal Advice for displaced international care workers



As part of the 2024-25 International Recruitment Programme, we are delighted to be able to extend the legal support to displaced international care workers living in the West Midlands.

You can direct displaced international care workers who may need some legal support to www.revoked.support where they can sign up for support on sponsorship or employment issues.

Please note this service cannot provide support for employment disputes or tribunals.

Coming soon...

We will be launching an essential guide for displaced international care workers, focusing on questions to ask a new employer.

The guide will include:

- A checklist of key questions to ask potential employers.
- Guidance on understanding employment contracts and terms.
- Tips for identifying ethical practices and avoiding exploitation.

The guide will be available to download via the International Recruitment Social Care Hub early 2025: www.irwestmids.co.uk. We will also share via Care Associations and Local Authorities.

Enhanced Support Through Local Authorities

Through the Small Grants Programme, eight councils across the West Midlands, have received additional funding so that they can offer additional support to local care providers and international care workers.

This support varies according to the Local Authority. The type of support includes:

- Support for international care workers who have lost their job due to their employer's sponsor licence being revoked
- Training and development
- Pastoral support
- Recruitment fairs and much more...

International care workers seeking employment will be provided with more information about the relevant support available to them when they register at www.revoked.support or when they contact their Local Authority.



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Local Authorities implementing an Enhanced Support Offer include:



We will be sharing more information about the Local Authorities Enhanced Offers and share best practice via the International Recruitment Hub, which is currently being refreshed. We are planning for updates to be made in January.

www.irwestmids.co.uk

One example of an enhanced offer is from Coventry Council who reached out to displaced international care workers who were impacted by revocations. We have been working closely to ensure those impacted have access to the self-serve support platform, My UK Life, and are aware of the enhanced support offers, provided by Coventry City Council. The team have had some success helping re-sponsor at risk individuals with reputable local care providers. Support includes:

- **International Recruitment Good Practice Provider Forum** – this brings together local providers who have shown proven good practice in International Recruitment or could provide an element of peer support to providers who are considering taking on international workers. The Forum also includes some organisations such as migration support and legal firms.
- **“Welcome Sessions” for international workers in Coventry.** Piece of learning from phase one to support recruits to settle into Coventry and understand what support is available to them in the City as they have no recourse to public funds.
- **Regular International Recruitment support group** for international workers to provide peer support.

If you would like more information about the Enhanced Support offer please reach out to the team at IR@coventry.gov.uk

Spotlight: Sharing best practice across local authorities

Each month the International Recruitment (IR) Leads across each of the local authorities meet to share how they are supporting displaced international workers. It is a space for collaboration and the exchange of ideas to enhance recruitment practices across the region. The first meeting took place in December, so we thought we would share some of the highlights:

- **Warwickshire County Council:** Introduced an accredited English language and cultural training course, tailored for international care workers, focusing on social care terminology and skills, with CPD accreditation.
- **Walsall Council:** Created an International Recruitment Response Team to support care providers during license suspensions or revocations and guide displaced care workers to appropriate resources.
- **Data-Driven Insights:** Efforts to integrate Necs Capacity Tracker data with quality assurance dashboards in Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council help identify workforce risks and direct support effectively.

This exchange of ideas highlights how local authorities and care providers can work together to adopt and adapt these practices to strengthen recruitment and workforce resilience.



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