

An information pack for people working in the West Midlands on a.....

Health and Care Worker Visa and Skilled Worker Visa



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Citizens Advice

Free, confidential advice, whoever you are.

Citizens Advice is there to help everyone who needs it with practical advice. The national charity offers confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free.

They help people overcome their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard.

They value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment.

For more information

[Learn more about Citizens Advice - Citizens Advice](#)



Disclaimer: This information was accurate when it was put together and should not be relied upon as detailed advice. This information applies to England and Wales.

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Your visa

Health and Care Worker Visa

Allows medical professionals and care workers to come to or stay in the UK to do an eligible job with the NHS, an NHS supplier or in adult social care.

Find out more: www.gov.uk/health-careworker-visa

Skilled Worker Visa

A Skilled Worker visa allows you to come to or stay in the UK to do an eligible job with an approved employer. It also allows you to work in UK waters.

Find out more: www.gov.uk/skilledworker-visa

You **must** follow the **requirements of your visa** allowing you to work. When you get your visa, you will be given a full list of what you can and cannot do.

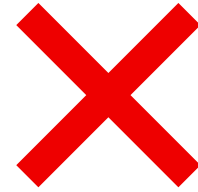
For both visa routes, you can:

- work in an eligible job
- study and do voluntary work
- travel abroad and return to the UK
- apply to settle permanently in the UK if you've lived in the UK for 5 years and meet the other eligibility requirements
- you can also work additional hours and may be able to bring dependents to the UK, however there are certain rules around this



You cannot:

- apply for most benefits (public funds), or the State Pension
- change jobs or employer unless you apply to update your visa

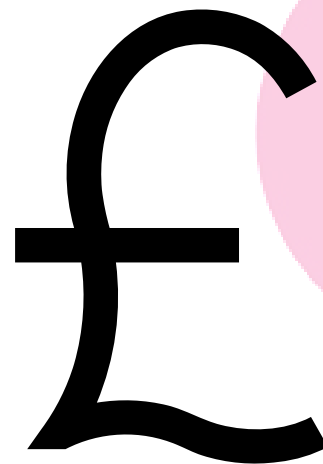


No Recourse to Public Funds

Your visa will say that you can't claim 'public funds'. Public funds include most benefits, applying for social housing or making a homelessness application.

Public funds for immigration purposes include the following:

- Universal Credit
- Pension Credit
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Carer's Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Maternity Allowance
- Funeral Expenses Payment
- Cold Weather Payment
- Winter Fuel Payment
- Budgeting Loan
- Child Benefit
- Social Housing & Homelessness Assistance
- Council Tax Reduction Schemes
- A Discretionary Payment made by a local authority under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011



If you have worked in the UK for 2 years or more you might have made enough National Insurance contributions to get Jobseekers Allowance if unemployed, or Employment Support Allowance if unable to work due to sickness.



Before you make a benefits application, you should **check if you can**.

If you are struggling because you can't claim public funds there might be other support available.



If you apply for public funds when you are not eligible it can affect any immigration applications you make in the future.

If you apply for public funds when you're not allowed to, your application for public funds will usually be refused.

The Home Office might also refuse any immigration applications you make in the future.

They might also refuse an application to:

- extend your visa or change to a different visa
- get a permanent right to live in the UK - this is called 'indefinite leave'



In rare cases, the Home Office might take you to court or end your visa early. If you're worried that you've claimed public funds when you weren't allowed to, talk to a Citizens Advice near you.

Things to consider while settling in the UK

Your Health and Care Worker Visa or Skilled Worker Visa grants you permission to live and work in the UK for a set amount of time. However, there are certain situations where you need to prove your immigration status to others, such as your landlord.



Keep records of important documents, contracts, receipts for large payments and tenancy agreements

An eVisa is an online record of your immigration status and the conditions of your permission to enter or stay in the UK. You need to create a UKVI account to be able to access your eVisa.

Check your details in your UKVI account are **accurate and up to date**.

Your eVisa will be linked to your passport in your UKVI account. You must keep your passport or ID card details up to date in your UKVI account and report any changes.

You can share your immigration status information with third parties, such as employers or landlords,

by generating a share code in the [View and Prove service](#), which will give them time-limited access to your immigration status information. You can get a new share code whenever you need one.



It is important to consider the general cost of living. This will vary widely depending on where in the country you are. It can be useful to sit down and make a list of your expected monthly outgoings, so you can budget.

Our budgeting tool can help you with this: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-andmoney/budgeting1/work-out-your-budget/

Apply for your National Insurance Number

A National Insurance Number is a requirement for working in the UK and all employers will require it.

To get a National Insurance number you need to apply online: www.gov.uk/apply-national-insurance-number/how-to-apply

You'll need to prove your identity when you apply.

You can get help with your application from the National Insurance number application helpline:

- Telephone: **0800 141 2079** (Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm)

Setting up a UK bank account

Opening a bank account in the UK is a wise move for newcomers to the country.



Transaction fees can build up quickly if you continue to use **foreign debit or credit cards** in the UK. Having a local bank account can also be essential for setting up bill payments and receiving your salary.

You can open your UK bank account in a bank branch, through the bank's website, or using the bank's mobile app.

Find out how to get a bank account: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/banking/getting-a-bankaccount/

Housing

Finding a property

The quickest way to find a property is online, through property search websites. You can search specific areas of the West Midlands and arrange viewings easily.



Before you rent

Before renting, you'll need to provide some personal information. You'll usually need references from:

- your current and past landlords (if using a letting agent)
- your employer, to show you're in stable work

If you are asked for bank statements to prove income, make sure you cover your account numbers for security.

Guarantors

This is someone who agrees to pay the rent if you don't. You may need a guarantor, especially if you haven't rented before.

If you can't provide references

You might still be able to rent. Explain to the landlord or agent why you can't provide references. If you've paid rent on time before, show your tenancy agreement, rent book or bank statements.

You can also offer a 'character reference' which is a letter from an employer or someone who knows you, to show you're reliable.

Credit Checks

Letting agents and some landlords may run a credit check, but they must ask your permission first. Private landlords do this less often, as it can slow things down. They'll usually only see basic info, such as where you've lived, or if you've been bankrupt or had a Debt Relief Order.

When you've found a property to rent, you will have to make some payments before you move in. You will usually have to pay:

- a tenancy deposit, no more than 6 weeks' rent
- 1 to 2 months' rent in advance

Tenancy Deposits

You should get your deposit back at the end of your tenancy, unless your landlord has a valid reason to keep some. This means you must leave the property in the same condition as when you first moved there.

With an assured shorthold tenancy, your landlord or agent must:

- protect your deposit in a scheme
- provide written details of it

You can challenge any deductions you think are unfair.



It is important to pay your rent when it is due. If you cannot do this, you should seek advice and support.

Council Tax

Most people living in the UK have to pay council tax. This is a monthly charge to cover the costs of things like rubbish collection. It is set and collected by local councils.

If you've missed a council tax payment, you're in 'arrears'. This means you owe money to your council. You should contact your council straight away and ask to speak to someone in the council tax office and tell them about your situation. Don't wait for them to contact you. They should be able to tell you how to get help.

Household bills

You will need to arrange to pay the bills in your new home, for example:

- gas
- electricity
- broadband
- telephone



Your tenancy agreement should detail whether you or your landlord is responsible for paying for the gas or electricity.

If you're struggling to pay your bills or you owe money, there are things you can do including getting:

- help and support from your current provider
- a cheaper deal from another provider
- help and support from a Citizens Advice

Access to a computer

You can access a computer and the internet for free in most local libraries. Wherever you live, work or study in the West Midlands you can join a library and it's free.



Mobile phones

To get a UK SIM card, you have two options: a prepaid SIM or a contract. The right option for you will depend on your circumstances. There are many UK mobile operators to choose from.

Access to healthcare

Medical and hospital treatment is free of charge for people who are ordinarily resident in the UK. To be considered ordinarily resident, you must be living in the UK on a lawful and properly settled basis for the time being.

Ring **NHS 111** to get help for your symptoms.

Anyone in England can register and consult with a General Practitioner at your local medical practice without charge. An application to join a practice can only be refused if the practice has reasonable grounds for doing so.

Medical practices are not required to ask for proof of identity, address or immigration status from patients wishing to register. You can find your nearest medical practice by going to [Find a GP](#).

You must pay for medicines you get on prescriptions from a doctor.



Adults, under 60, have to pay to access optician services.

You can find a dental surgery that's convenient for you, whether it's near your home or work. Phone them to see if there are any NHS appointments available. If not, you may have to pay the full cost of any examination or treatment. You can find your nearest dentist by clicking [here](#).



Only call 999 in a **life-threatening emergency**.



Food costs

Food is widely available across the UK. Although it might seem more expensive at the time, it often works out cheaper to do a weekly shop. This way, you can set yourself a weekly budget.

Find out more about cutting the cost of your food shopping:

www.moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/cheap-supermarketshopping/

[Too Good to Go](#) is a social impact company trying to reduce food waste. Download their app and you can get surprise food bags at a reduced price from a range of food stores near you.

There will be various **food banks** in the local area for emergency food but you may need a referral from Citizens Advice or another local agency.

Transport

If you buy a car you must have a **valid** driver's license, tax, MOT and insurance for your vehicle.

Find out more:

- [Step by step guide for owning a car](#)
- [Your rights when stopped by the police](#)



Rail Travel

If you want to travel by train, think about getting a Railcard. You get a third off on many routes, so you might save £20 on a ticket that would have cost £60. You'll often find that the cost of a Railcard pays for itself over one or two long trips. Apply on the Railcard website: www.railcard.co.uk

Get a season ticket if you travel regularly and always check for advance tickets. Some cheap advance tickets might still be available the day before you travel. Look out for special offers, discounts and deals.

Bus and coach travel



You may qualify for a pass that saves you money on fares with your local bus operator.

Each operator has their own guidelines so check their website to see if you qualify.

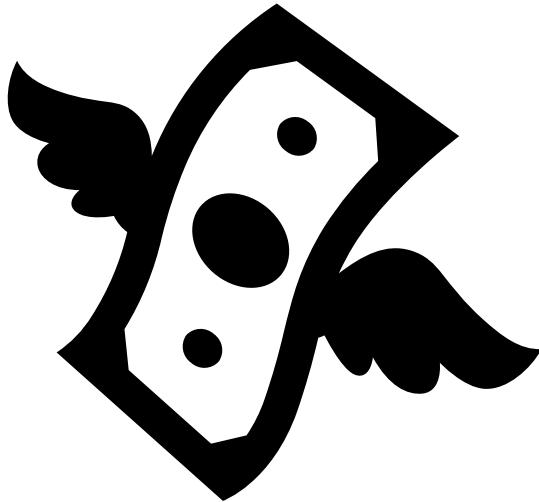
If you use the bus every day, you can save a lot of money over a year with a monthly pass or annual season ticket.

Look out for special deals during school breaks and bank holidays, some national coach companies offer cheaper fares.

Transport for West Midlands offers nine months of free bus travel, followed by three months at 50% off. There is a **form** that needs to be completed by your employer.

Transport for West Midlands does not operate buses in Shropshire.

Sending money back home



Whether you're moving to the UK to work, study or both, you may want to send money back to loved ones at home. As with everything else to do with your relocation, it's a good idea to research the cost of doing this.

While banks and traditional over-the counter money transfer companies are options, there's also online-only payment companies to consider.

Only send money when **YOU CHOOSE** to.

Bringing your family over

If you're a care worker or senior care worker

Your partner and children cannot apply to join you or stay in the UK as your dependants unless you were employed as a care worker or senior care worker in the UK and on a Skilled Worker Visa before **11 March 2024** and one of the following is true:

- you're currently still on a Skilled Worker Visa
- you're extending your Skilled Worker Visa with your current employer
- you're changing to a new job within the same occupation code while on a Skilled Worker visa

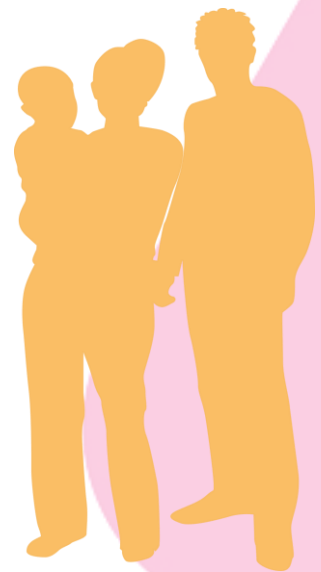
Your partner and children can also apply to join you or stay in the UK as your 'dependants' if they're eligible. They'll need to complete separate applications.

If your partner or child's application is successful, their visa will usually end on the same date as yours. If a child's parents have visas with different expiry dates, the child's visa will end on the earlier date.

A dependant partner or child is any of the following:

- your husband, wife, civil partner or unmarried partner
- your child under 18 - including if they were born in the UK during your stay
- your child over 18 if they currently have permission ('leave to enter' or 'leave to remain') to be in the UK as your dependant

You'll need to provide evidence of your relationship to your dependant when you apply.



If you're the first person in your family to apply, you can get a 'family linking code' to connect your applications together. Your family members can enter the same code when they apply.

Your partner

You must be able to prove one of the following:

- you're in a civil partnership or marriage that's recognised in the UK
- you've been living together in a relationship for at least 2 years when you apply
- you've been in a relationship for at least 2 years when you apply but you cannot live together, for example because you're working or studying in different places, or it's not accepted in your culture.

If you're not living together, you'll need to prove that you have an ongoing commitment to each other, for example by providing evidence that you: communicate regularly with each other support each other financially care for any children you have together spend time together as a couple, for example on holiday or at event

Money they need to support themselves

Your partner and children must have a certain amount of money available to support themselves while they're in the UK.

You or your partner or child will need:

- £285 for your partner
- £315 for one child
- £200 for each additional child

Example

You or your partner or child, would need to have £600 to bring your partner and one child with you to the UK (£285 for your partner and £315 for your child).

You would also need to have £1,270 available to support yourself for your own application.



Childcare and schooling options

Some early education and childcare is funded by the UK government for children in England. Government-funded early education and childcare is **not** classed as a 'public fund' for immigration purposes, so can be used by a child regardless of their immigration status. **However**, some schemes have eligibility requirements relating to the immigration status of the parent(s) and so may not be available to all families. The following schemes are available to families regardless of their immigration status:

- 15 hours/week for disadvantaged 2-year-olds
- 15 hours/week is provided universally for all 3 and 4-year-olds

There are very specific rules around childcare schemes and immigration status. For more information go [here](#).



Foreign national children resident in the UK, normally have the right to attend state funded and independent schools in England. It is the responsibility of the parents to check that their children have a right under their UK entry conditions to study at a school before applying for a place.

Find out more here:

www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-admissions-applications-from-overseas-children



Employment

Your employer should give you an employment contract document called a 'written statement' or 'contract of employment'. Your contract will include some of the terms of your employment contract, but there might be other terms.

They must include information like:

- how much and how often you'll be paid
- where you'll be working
- the hours you have to work
- how much holiday you'll get
- the rules about sick leave and sick pay



If your employer hasn't given you a written statement or contract, ask them to send you one.

UK law also says you have a number of employment rights called 'statutory rights'. You have these rights even if they're not mentioned in the contract.

Find out more here: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/contractsof-employment/



If you are having any difficulties with your employer, you should get advice. Your immigration status can make it more complex.

Examples of difficulties you should seek advice and support for include:

- Being treated worse than your UK co-workers. Treating a worker less favourably because of your nationality can be unlawful discrimination
- Being racially harassed at work
- Experiencing sexual harassment
- Not being paid the rate of pay you were promised
- Being unfairly dismissed



If you face difficulties with your employer, you can find support here:
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/

If your employer hasn't paid you what they owe you

Your employer should pay you on time for work you've done - they should pay you on your agreed payday.

You can challenge your employer if:

- they haven't paid your wages
- they've underpaid you
- they've deducted some or all of your wages - and you don't agree with their reason

If you have a payslip, you can check it to help you work out exactly what the problem is. You should talk to your employer to find out why they haven't paid you what you expected. If they've made a mistake, ask them to pay you straight away.

Find out more here: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/pay/problems-getting-paid/>



If you've lost your job or employer has lost their sponsorship license

If you **resign or are dismissed**, your employer has 10 days to tell the Home Office.

You then have 60 days to get a new visa or leave the country, even if you have been unfairly dismissed.

The Home Office has paused sending notice letters immediately. Meaning that if you lose your job for whatever reason, you may not receive a letter notifying you of the cancellation of your visa for some time. **Until you receive a cancellation letter you are able to stay in the UK.**

If you are considering resigning it is best to have a new job and sponsor before handing in your notice.

If your employer loses **their sponsorship license** you will receive a letter from the Home Office giving 60 days notice of the cancellation of your visa. There can be a long period between your employer losing their license and you receiving a letter.

Once you get a letter giving notice of cancellation of your visa you are not allowed to work.

If you want to continue to work and stay in the UK, you'll need to either:

- get a new sponsored job
- change to a different, valid visa



Contact Citizens Advice if you have lost sponsorship and wish to stay in the UK

Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery can take many forms including the movement of people, forced labour, servitude and slavery. It is an international crime, affecting millions of people around the world.

Some of the types of Modern Slavery include:

- **Human Trafficking:** Someone is moved by **force, fraud, coercion or deception** to be exploited
- **Forced Labour:** Work someone is forced to do because they're threatened with a punishment and didn't choose to do it
- **Bonded labour or debt bondage:** Debt bondage is a form of forced labour and happens when a person is forced to work to pay off a debt. They are tricked into working for little or no pay, with no control over their debt
- **Domestic servitude:** Someone is forced to work in someone else's home, perhaps cooking, cleaning and looking after children, with little freedom or pay.

There are no set number of signs that will suggest someone is a victim of trafficking or subject to forced labour. Victims of Modern Slavery may have entered the UK legally and are exploited later on.

There are some common signs of Modern Slavery:

- Being rarely allowed to travel alone
- Not having documents that allows travel for example, passports, driving licence, etc
- Individuals have few personal possessions
- Working unusually long hours
- Living in dirty, cramped, or overcrowded accommodation
- Working and living at the same address
- Not having a contract, being paid less than the National Minimum Wage, or not being paid at all





If you think you or someone you know is a victim of Modern Slavery you can report it to 101 or contact the Modern Slavery Helpline 08000 121 700

Where to get support

The West Midlands Social Care International Recruitment Hub is a website with lots of information about support available for people working in the care sector.

Find it here: irwestmids.co.uk/



WM SOCIAL CARE
• International Recruitment •

If you have been informed that you have lost your sponsorship and you need additional **support finding re-employment**, you can use this online form to get access to support:

www.wmca.care/p2c/support

Lifted can **match you with an employer** who will treat you the way you deserve to be treated, and support you through the switching process. It is completely free. Get in touch with Lifted [here](#).

There is also **AI coaching support**. This is designed to support international care workers living in the West Midlands. From CV tips, training and job opportunities, it's there to guide you every step of the way. Find it here: ai.myuk.life/wm/

For information about other national organisations that can provide support to you to help improve your wellbeing and safety, you can use this directory [here](#).