



Skilled Worker Certificate of Sponsorship

Frequently Asked Questions

Created by NWSSP Employment Services Certificate of Sponsorship Team

IMPORTANT: NWSSP Certificate of Sponsorship team are not Immigration specialists, and the Home Office should be the first point of contact for any specific Immigration advice

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General

1. What is a Certificate of Sponsorship?

A Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) is an electronic record assigned to a worker who requires a visa in order to work within the UK. A Certificate of Sponsorship holds an applicant's personal details and information about the job they've been offered. It is not a paper document.

2. What Sponsorship licence does NWSSP hold?

NWSSP is an A-Rated Skilled Worker Sponsor which allows us to assign CoS' to skilled workers who have been made an offer of employment within NHS Wales provided that they meet the essential eligibility criteria.

3. What is NWSSP's Sponsor number?

This will be detailed at the top of your CoS that is assigned to you.

4. Is NWSSP a Limited company?

NWSSP is not a limited company and you should answer No to this question when submitting your visa application.

5. When must a Certificate of Sponsorship be used by?

When a CoS is assigned, an applicant should use it to apply for their visa within 3 months. An expiry date will be detailed on the CoS when it is issued.

6. What is the cost of a Certificate of Sponsorship to an employer?

The cost to assign a CoS to a Skilled worker is £525. In addition to this, unless an [exemption](#) applies, there is also an Immigration Skills Charge of £1320 per year that the applicant is sponsored to work within the organisation.

7. How is a Certificate of Sponsorship assigned?

When all relevant supporting information has been supplied, NWSSP CoS Team will review the details to confirm the individual meets criteria for sponsorship, and then

assign the Certificate of Sponsorship. The CoS will then be sent directly to the applicant via email. The Recruiting Manager/Single Lead Employer will be copied into this email for reference.

8. Is there a minimum salary requirement for a Certificate of Sponsorship?

As of 4th April 2024, the Minimum Salary threshold as set by His Majesty's Government on advice of the independent Migration Advisory Committee, is outlined within the Skilled Worker visa [guidance](#).

In line with the new Points Based Immigration System, applicants will be able to trade characteristics, such as their qualifications, against a lower salary to get the required number of points.

You must also be paid at least either:

- the minimum 'standard' salary rate for the type of work you'll be doing
- the minimum 'lower' salary rate if you got your certificate of sponsorship (CoS) before 4 April 2024

The minimum 'standard' salary for the type of work you'll be doing is whichever is the higher of:

- £41,700 per year
- the 'going rate' for the type of work you'll be doing

You might still be able to apply for a Skilled Worker visa if your job is eligible but your salary is less than the standard salary requirement of £41,700 or your job's standard 'going rate'.

You can be paid between 70% and 90% of the standard going rate for your job if your salary is at least £33,400 per year and you meet one of the following criteria:

- your job is on the [immigration salary list](#)
- you're under 26, studying or a recent graduate, or in professional training
- you have a science, technology, engineering or maths (STEM) PhD level qualification that's relevant to your job (if you have a relevant PhD level qualification in any other subject your salary must be at least £26,100)

- you have a postdoctoral position in science or higher education

Applicants can score tradeable points for their salary and other attributes, those of which are outlined in the [Skilled Worker guidance](#).

9. I work in Health Care, are there different salary thresholds for this?

There are [different salary rules](#) if you work in some healthcare or education jobs. Your salary must be at least £25,000 - or more if your job's 'going rate' is higher.

The going rates for these jobs are based on the national pay scales set by the relevant independent body, for example the NHS.

10. I got my CoS before 4th April 2024 or I've been on a Skilled Worker visa since before the guidance changed, am I still subject to the increased salary thresholds?

There are lower salary requirements if either:

- you got your certificate of sponsorship for this visa application before 4 April 2024
- you got your certificate of sponsorship for your first Tier 2 or Skilled Worker visa before 4 April 2024 and have continually held one or more Skilled Worker visas since then

Please review [latest guidance](#) in full to understand which rule may apply to you in this instance.

11. What is a SOC code?

A [Standard Occupational Classification \(SOC\) code](#) is used to assess the correct skill level and appropriate salary level for specific job roles. A SOC code is required for every CoS and Single Lead Employer/Recruiting Manager will need to identify the most suitable SOC code for the role the applicant has been offered.

There is a [tool](#) which can be used to determine which SOC Code is most appropriate for the role. There may not be an exact match, but the closest to should be chosen, provided that it is still accurate.

Application Process

1. What documents do I need to provide as part of the application process?

In order for NWSSP to assign a CoS, you will need to provide the following documents:

- Copy of Passport (*Including all relevant pages*)
- Copy of current visa (*Front and back*)
- Copy of recent payslip
- Copy of Medical Degree certificate (*if applicable*)
- Evidence of professional registration (*if applicable*)

For Doctors/Dentists in Training, you will be contacted by Single Lead Employer who will request these documents from you approximately 3 months prior to your start date. For other staff groups, NWSSP CoS Team will obtain your ID documents via Trac if you will have already provided them for your pre-employment checks, or we may contact you directly to obtain them.

2. How long can I obtain a CoS for?

For those in training positions, you will be assigned a CoS for the duration of your training post. If you do not require the full duration due to your upcoming eligibility for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILTR), please inform SLE and NWSSP CoS Team of this **before** your CoS is processed. You should also inform SLE/NWSSP CoS Team of whether you will be leaving the UK to apply for your visa as this will determine the type of CoS you receive.

For all other applicants, the Recruiting Manager of your post will decide how long they wish to sponsor you.

A Skilled Worker visa can be assigned for a maximum of 5 years at one time, before it can then be extended if required. An applicant will need to apply to extend or update their visa when it expires or if changing jobs or employer. If an applicant wishes to stay in the UK longer than the initial 5 years, they can apply to extend their visa as many times as they like provided that they still meet the eligibility criteria.

After 5 years, they may be able to apply to settle permanently in the UK, also known as Indefinite leave to remain.

A Skilled Worker visa will be assigned for less time if an individual is switching from a Student or Graduate visa;

- If switching from a Student visa, they can be sponsored for a maximum of 4 years.
- If switching from a Graduate visa, they can be sponsored for 4 years minus any time they have already spent on their Graduate visa.

3. What should I do after receiving my CoS?

After NWSSP have issued you with your CoS, you should check that all the information is correct, including your personal details, job details and start/end dates of your CoS. If any information is incorrect, please contact NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk immediately to advise of any corrections which need to be made.

Once you have ensured that all details are correct, you should proceed with making your visa application via the Home Office.

Please note – CoS' that are assigned to trainees who will be employed by NWSSP Single Lead Employer will have the Organisation address as the place of work, and not a Health Board address. This is sufficient and your place of work will be confirmed separately by your Employer.

4. I already have a valid visa from my current Employer, can I use this to commence work in NHS Wales?

If your visa is not sponsored by the Organisation you are going to work for, i.e. NWSSP or another Health Board in Wales, you cannot use your existing visa and will need a new CoS before being able to commence in the role. You should obtain your new visa before starting work and cannot work for the new organisation using your previous visa.

5. I have an ongoing CoS with another Employer, will this affect my application?

The Sponsor Management System will only allow **one** CoS to be assigned to an applicant at any given time. Therefore, if you have an ongoing application with another Employer, they will need to withdraw the CoS before we can assign one to you.

6. An amendment has been made to my CoS but the information still looks incorrect, what should I do?

Once a CoS has been issued, the only way to make an amendment is for NWSSP CoS Team to add a 'Sponsor note' with the corrected information. The Home Office will consider these notes alongside your application and this will in no way impact your visa application.

7. The salary on my CoS is less than I expected, is this an issue?

The salary detailed on your CoS will be the basic salary for your role and your exact salary will be confirmed nearer your start date, by your Employer.

8. I currently have a Tier 2/Skilled Worker visa from NWSSP and require an extension, what should I do?

Please inform your Recruiting Manager/SLE that your visa is due to expire and they should then contact NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk with a completed CoS Request Form which can be downloaded from our [website](#), as well as all of your relevant documents (Passport, Payslip, Current visa etc). We will then review all documents to determine if your visa is eligible for an extension. If we are able to proceed, we will then send your Cos via email.

Please note, we are only able to request an extension to your visa **3 months** prior to the date of your current visa's expiry date, so your request should be sent in line with this timeframe.

9. Am I eligible for the Health and Care Worker visa?

To qualify for a Health and Care Worker visa, you must:

- be a qualified doctor, nurse, health professional or adult social care professional
- work in an eligible health or social care job
- work for a UK employer that's been approved by the Home Office
- have a 'certificate of sponsorship' from your employer with information about the role you've been offered in the UK
- be paid a minimum salary - how much depends on the type of work you do

Please review the [Health and Care Worker](#) visa guidance for more information and to understand if your role is eligible.

If you are eligible for a Health and Care Worker visa, the NWSSP CoS Team will specify this in the 'Job Description Summary' section of your CoS and will also add this to the CoS email.

10. Will NWSSP reimburse me with any visa application costs?

NWSSP/your Employer will pay for the initial CoS and any extensions, including any Immigration Skills Charge (ISC). NWSSP however, are not responsible for the costs of an individual's visa application and no funds will be reimbursed. Applicants are individually responsible for all of their own visa costs. For more information on fees involved in the process, please see following link: <https://www.gov.uk/health-care-worker-visa/how-much-it-costs>

11. Will I receive regular updates throughout the CoS application stage?

Due to the high volume of CoS' the team have to process, it is not possible to provide regular updates on each individual's application. We would ask however that if you have any urgent queries or are concerned your application may be delayed/not received, that you contact us on NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk.

Once we have been provided with all of the correct information and documents by your Employer, we will aim to assign your CoS within 3 working days.

12. How long should I expect to wait before receiving my CoS?

A CoS can only be assigned 3 months prior to a start date; therefore you should not expect to receive your CoS before this time. For Doctors/Dentists in training, SLE will complete a CoS request form for you and will then send this to NWSSP for

processing. For example, for an August start date, you should expect to receive your CoS from May onwards.

NWSSP will aim to process your CoS as soon as possible after receiving the completed documents, this is usually within 3 working days.

13. I am due to be on Maternity Leave when commencing post, can I still start in my position?

If this applies to you, please contact

NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk so that we can review this further and provide more information on an individual basis.

14. I have recently received a new passport but you have already sent my CoS, what should I do?

If you have not yet used your CoS, please send a copy of your new passport to NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk and we will be able to add a Sponsor Note with the amended passport details. If you have used your CoS, you should inform the Home Office so that they can take this into consideration when reviewing your application.

15. I have decided that I no longer want/need a CoS, what should I do?

Please inform us as soon as possible if you no longer require a CoS by emailing NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk. Ideally, we should know before assigning you with a CoS if you do not require it.

16. Can NWSSP CoS Team assist me with my visa application?

NWSSP CoS Team are not able to assist with an individual's visa application and it is your responsibility to ensure that all of your information is correct and in line with Home Office guidance.

17. Will maintenance funding be included within my CoS?

If your employing Health Board certifies maintenance funding for you, this will be indicated on your CoS. If you have a query around maintenance, please contact us on NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk

After Application

1. How long will it take for me to receive a decision on my visa application?

The timescales for processing applications will depend on individual circumstances and other Home Office factors, i.e. if they are experiencing delays. More information around timescales can be found on the [Home Office website](#)

2. What should I do when I receive my new Right to Work document?

Once you have received your new visa, which will likely be a Share Code, you should provide this to your Employer so that they can keep this on your personal file. If you are going through pre-employment checks with Recruitment Services, you should firstly provide them with your share code to satisfy the Right to Work check.

3. I have applied for a Skilled Worker visa however it has been refused by the Home Office and I need to re-apply, what do I do?

If this situation applies to you, please contact NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk

4. Do I need to provide an Overseas Criminal Record certificate?

There is a requirement for some applicants to apply for an Overseas Criminal Record check to support their visa application. Applicants will need to provide their Employer with a criminal record certificate from each country they have been present continuously or cumulatively for 12 months or more in the 10 years. This will also apply to any dependants who are joining the applicant in the UK.

For the full list of occupations that require an Overseas Criminal Record check, please review the following [guidance](#).

5. What should I do if there is a change to my circumstances after receiving my CoS and taking up employment?

Any change to circumstances must be reported to NWSSP CoS Team at the earliest possible opportunity (within 5 working days of the change). Please see below a list

of changes you will need to inform us of. We must also be informed of the full details of this change:

- Delay in your Start Date
- You failed to attend 10 Consecutive days without permission
- You failed to take up post/resigned after commencing post
- Worker dismissed by sponsor/Worker made redundant by sponsor
- Work completed early
- Worker has moved to another sponsorship
- Worker has moved to another immigration category
- Worker has taken extended unpaid leave
- Work Location has changed
- Change in Job Title/Duties
- Change to Salary/Working hours
- Worker taking period of unpaid leave

There is a Changes Form on our [website](#) which should be used to report any such instances.

As part of NWSSP's Sponsor Licence duties, we are required to inform the Home Office at the earliest possible opportunity, of any changes to Sponsored workers circumstances. It is therefore imperative that applicants inform us as soon as possible, of any changes.

6. I didn't start work on the date mentioned within my CoS, what should I do?

You should inform NWSSP CoS Team immediately by emailing NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk if you did not/will not be able to commence work on the date you were intended to, as per your CoS. Home Office guidance states the following:

'Once a worker has been granted permission, they should normally start working in their sponsored employment **no later than 28 days after whichever is the latest** of:

- the start date on their CoS (taking into account any changes to that date reported by you before their application for entry clearance or permission was decided)
- the "valid from" date on the worker's entry clearance vignette (visa)

- the date the worker is granted permission to enter, if they entered the UK without entry clearance under the Creative Worker visa concession
- the date the worker is notified of a grant of entry clearance or permission to stay'

7. Can I work any additional hours to those mentioned on my CoS?

If you work overtime in the job you're being sponsored for, you do not need to update your visa. There's no limit to how many hours of overtime you can do.

You can also work up to 20 hours a week in another job or for your own business, as long as you're still doing the job you're being sponsored for.

Your work must be in an [eligible occupation code](#). You can also do unpaid voluntary work.

If you'll be doing more than 20 hours per week in another job, you'll need to [apply to update your visa](#) so that you're being sponsored to do both jobs.

You'll need to:

- get a new certificate of sponsorship from your second employer
- include a letter with your application explaining that you want to change your current permission to stay

More information regarding this can be found within this [guidance](#).

8. Do I have to pay an Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS)?

Some applicants will need to pay IHS as part of their visa application. This is not something within NWSSP's control and is a Home Office requirement. More information can be found via this link: <https://www.gov.uk/healthcare-immigration-application>

9. When can I apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILTR)?

Applicants should follow the below link to determine when/if they are eligible to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/indefinite-leave-to-remain-calculating-continuous-period-in-uk>

10. I am in the process of applying for ILTR and require a supporting letter, can you provide this?

Your employer can provide you with a supporting letter to accompany your ILTR application, this will include all relevant information including your SOC code, salary, any periods of leave etc.

Useful Links

- [Points Based Immigration System](#)
- [Skilled Worker Visa](#)
- [Health and Care Worker Visa](#)
- [HEIW](#)
- [NHS Employers](#)
- [List of SOC codes](#)
- [Going Rates](#)
- [SOC Code Tool](#)
- [NWSSP CoS Team Website](#)
- [Temporary Shortage List](#)
- [Immigration Salary List](#)

Contact Details

If you require any further information on the CoS process, please contact NWSSP CoS Team on NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk