



Becoming a Sponsor

A Guide for GP Practices in Wales

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Sponsorship Team

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Process Flow for GP Practices



** Current GP vacancies in Wales can be viewed via <https://gpwales.co.uk/>

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Becoming a Sponsor

To employ someone to work for you from outside the UK you will usually require a sponsor licence to provide them with a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS). In line with Home Office guidance, any organisation who wishes to sponsor a Skilled Worker must be the Employer, therefore the most suitable option going forward is for GP Practices to apply for their own Sponsor licence and assign a Certificate of Sponsorship to any individual they wish to employ.

More information can be found using the below link:

[UK visa sponsorship for employers: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-for-employers/overview)

When you apply, a decision will be made within 8 weeks of your application. This can be fast tracked for an additional cost if required. Please see reimbursement section below.

As part of the application process supporting documentation must be supplied. The documentation you are required to supply are outlined [here](#).

When you apply for the licence, you will need to appoint members of your organization to manage the sponsorship process. More information can be found using this [link](#).

When applying, you will need to ensure that you fully review your application before submitting – *i.e. ensure you have selected the **correct size organisation**, so the correct fees apply.*

Once you are ready to apply this can be done using the below link:

[UK visa sponsorship for employers: Apply for your licence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/uk-visa-sponsorship-for-employers/apply-for-your-licence)

Should you have any questions on the process we can be contacted for further information using the below email:

NWSSP.CertificateofSponsorship@wales.nhs.uk

Costs and Fees

There are costs involved in both applying for a licence and sponsoring individuals.

The Fee for the licence depends on whether you are classed as a [small or large organisation](#). Once your application is successful this licence is valid indefinitely provided that you continue to meet the necessary eligibility and criteria requirements set by the Home Office.

GP Practice Licence Fee

(one-off payment - Small Practice) - £611

GP Practice Licence Fee

(one-off payment - Large Practice) - £1,682

Please ensure you choose the correct option when applying as the fees vary. If the incorrect option is chosen, you would need to rectify this directly with the Home Office. Any refund for this or other errors made with the application would be refunded directly from them and not as part of the invoice reimbursement from NWSSP/Welsh Government.

In addition to the costs of the licence fee there are separate costs for each individual you wish to sponsor.

There is a sponsorship fee of £525 for each sponsorship, and on top of that you may also need to pay an Immigration Skills Charge which is £1320 per year you sponsor a worker (if you are a Large organisation, or £480 per year if small). *For example, a large Organisation sponsoring a GP for 2 years would pay £3165.*

The Practice would therefore need to ensure there is a credit card available for payment of both the one-off Licence fee and any individual sponsorships they assign as this is the only form of payment which can currently be used on the Home Office website.

There are some cases where the Immigration Skills Charge would not be payable, more information can be found on this using the link below;

[UK visa sponsorship for employers: Immigration skills charge - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

More information on this and the reimbursement available from Welsh Government can be found on our [website](#).

Reimbursement

A Welsh Government funded model allows Practices in Wales who have applied for a Sponsor Licence and applied to sponsor a General Practitioner, to be reimbursed for these costs.

The reimbursement request should be submitted **within 3 months** of approval to

NWSSP.OCRInvoiceAutomation@wales.nhs.uk, also copying in NWSSP.Finance@wales.nhs.uk.

The request should be addressed to: **NWSSP Finance, Velindre University NHS Trust, PO Box 112, Pontypool, NP4 4DG** and must include a PDF invoice and all Home Office confirmation you have received. If you are sponsoring an individual GP, please also ensure you include their name and professional registration details.

Once received, your invoice will go through an internal approval process, and you will be contacted if further information is required.

If applying for a Sponsor Licence via the fast-track route, to help avoid unnecessary costs, Practices are expected to apply in sufficient time to utilise standard Home Office processing timescales and consider all available alternatives. Fast-Track fees are not routinely reimbursable and should not be used as a default.

Please review all options available before paying the additional fast track fee, for example, if you are employing a recent GP trainee, they will likely have a 4-month extension included within their current visa which will enable them to work for you up to 20 hours per week whilst the licence application/their CoS application is pending.

The 4-month extension allows the individual to remain in the UK and seek further employment once their course has ended. Any request for reimbursement of a fast-track fee must be supported by a clear business justification and evidence that alternative options were explored. Requests will be considered on an individual exception basis and reimbursement is not guaranteed.

Further information can be found in a later section of this document.

Assigning a CoS – GP Practice

The steps below outline the process for assigning a Certificate of Sponsorship to an applicant applying for a Skilled Worker visa within a GP Practice.

Log into the system using the following link - <https://www.points.homeoffice.gov.uk/gui-sms-jsf/home/SMS-003-Home.faces> and enter your username and password (*will be found on the email you have received from the Home Office*)

SMS log in

You must hold a sponsor licence to be able to log into SMS.

If you don't hold a licence or you want to add a route to an existing licence, please use the [sponsor application](#).

To log into SMS, enter your SMS user ID and password. You **MUST** be an appointed Level 1 or 2 user to access SMS and to use any functions in the system. Misuse of SMS user IDs may lead to action being taken against you.

If you are copying and pasting your user ID and/or password, please ensure that spaces are not included at the end. If you enter an incorrect user ID or password three times, your account will be locked for approximately 20 minutes. If this occurs, you should try again later.

You must have Javascript enabled on your browser and a PDF viewer installed to use some functions in SMS.

[Forgotten your password?](#)

SMS log in

User ID:

Password:

[Cancel](#) [Log in](#)

When logged in, click 'Workers' on the left-hand column, and then click 'Create and Assign'

Home

Licence summary, applications and services

Workers

Create and assign

Defined CoS

View CoS

Sponsorship duties

Manage work addresses

Change password

Contact

Log out

Workers

Select the function you wish to perform. Details of each function can be found under each link and additional information can be obtained from the **Help** links. You may also use the menu left-hand side of the screen.

Create and assign

Create single CoS

Create group CoS

Create batches of CoS

Amend information on a CoS before it is assigned

Assign CoS to migrants

[Help \(opens in a new window\)](#)

Then select 'Skilled Worker' from the first drop down which appears. If the applicant is currently on a Skilled Worker/Tier 2 visa with another Employer, the next drop down should be 'Skilled Worker (Changes of Employment – ISC Liable),

and then click Next

You are here > Sponsorship management system > Workers > Create and assign CoS

Create and assign CoS

Select the relevant route and category (if applicable) in which you wish to create the CoS, then choose **Next** to continue. Alternatively, choose **Back** to return to the previous screen.

You may have to make an additional payment, known as the Immigration Skills Charge (ISC), if you are assigning a CoS to either a Skilled Worker or a Senior or Specialist Worker. Refer to [Part 2 of the sponsor guidance](#) for detailed information on when you have to pay and how much it costs.

Once you have created and saved a CoS in an 'ISC liable' category, proceed to the Online payment screen, where the amount you have to pay will be displayed.

Route

Select the route
Skilled Worker

Select the category
Please select

- Skilled Worker (Switching immigration category - ISC liable)
- Skilled Worker (Extensions - ISC exempt)
- Skilled Worker (Extensions - ISC liable)
- Skilled Worker (Changes of Employment - ISC exempt)
- Skilled Worker (Changes of Employment - ISC liable)
- Skilled Worker (graduate in Tier 4/Student Route switching to Skilled Worker)
- Skilled Worker (Switching immigration category - ISC exempt)

Back **Next**

You can then select 'Create new single certificate'. This page will then take you to the form you need to complete with the applicant/job details

Create and assign CoS

Select the relevant option, complete any additional fields and choose **Next** to continue. Alternatively, choose **Back** to return to the previous screen.

Route

Skilled Worker (Changes of Employment - ISC liable)

Select from the options below:

- ☒ Create new single certificate
- ☐ Create new single certificate based on an existing certificate
- ☐ Create new batch of certificate(s)
- ☐ Find an existing single certificate
- ☐ Find an existing batch of certificate(s)

Back **Next**

Once you have entered all the information, you can click Save at the bottom. It will then give you a completed summary of what you've entered and you can again click through to the next page (*you will also need to click to agree a declaration*)

You'll then be presented with a screen which will give you an 'assign' button – Click this and you'll be taken through to a payment screen. You can complete the payment as you would any other payment online, and you'll then receive confirmation that it's gone through.

Key Considerations:

- Job Title - it would be recommended to avoid abbreviations, so use 'General Practitioner' instead of GP
- Work End Date – It would be worthwhile checking with the applicant how long they require further sponsorship for. The likelihood is that they will only require up to 2 years to cover the remaining period where they can then apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (*after 5 years in the UK*)
- Job Description Summary – This should be a paragraph of the key duties of the applicant but should also include the following: *Applicant is applying via Skilled Worker Route, is taking up a job in one of the specified SOC codes and will be employed by a GP Practice in Wales. They therefore meet the eligibility criteria for the Health and Care Visa Scheme.*
- Maintenance refers to an Employer supporting the individual financially in their first month of employment should they require it – this can be a payment of up to £1270. If the individual is already in the UK, they likely won't request this, but if you do tick 'Yes' it does help their visa application as they do not need to evidence their bank account funds. If of course they do request it and you've said yes, then you would need to provide them with the support.

Information to provide after assigning a CoS

When you have assigned a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) to an individual, you will then need to provide them with certain details so that they are able to apply for their Visa.

You should firstly save a copy of their CoS from the Sponsor Management System (SMS) by going to 'Workers', 'View CoS', 'Search for CoS', enter the Family name of the individual, click 'Next'. Then click into their name and scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Print' which should then create a PDF version of the CoS which you can save to your drive.

The screenshot shows the SMS interface. On the left, a sidebar menu has 'Workers' circled in red. Under 'Workers', 'View CoS' is selected, and 'Search for CoS' is also circled in red. An arrow points from 'Search for CoS' to the 'View CoS' page. The 'View CoS' page has a heading 'View CoS' and a description: 'Search for an existing CoS by entering the individual's details. You must enter either the passport number or family name; you can also refine your search by entering the given name and/or date of birth. Choose **Next** to continue.' Below this is a 'Search for a CoS' form with fields for 'Passport number:', 'Family name:', 'Given name(s):', and 'Date of birth:'. The 'Family name' field is circled in red. Below the form are buttons for 'Back', 'Advanced', and 'Next'. At the bottom of the page, there are buttons for 'Back', 'Print' (circled in red), 'Status history', 'Activity history', and 'Transfer'.

You should then send this PDF to the individual via email and also provide them with the following information –

- Sponsor Address (Work Address registered to Sponsor Licence when set up)
- Full Work Address (GP Practice address where individual will be working)
- Link for individual to follow to apply for their visa - <https://www.gov.uk/skilled-worker-visa>
- Advise that the CoS is valid for 3 months so they must use it within this time

The individual should inform their Sponsor as soon as possible if any of the below changes occur –

- Delay in your Start Date
- You failed to attend 10 Consecutive days without permission
- You failed to take up post
- You have 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 immigrations category
- Worker has taken extended unpaid leave
- Work Location has changed
- Change in Job Title/Duties
- Change to Salary/Working hours
- Migrant taking period of unpaid leave

If you wish to sponsor another individual after your license has been approved additional allocation will need to be requested on the SMS. Please use the following guide to do this.

Requesting CoS allocation on Sponsor Management System

Log into Sponsor Management System using username and password - <https://www.points.homeoffice.gov.uk/gui-sms-jsf/SMS-001-Landing.faces>

SMS log in

You must hold a sponsor licence to be able to log into SMS.

If you don't hold a licence or you want to add a route to an existing licence, please use the [sponsor application](#).

To log into SMS, enter your SMS user ID and password. You **MUST** be an appointed Level 1 or 2 user to access SMS and to use any functions in the system. Misuse of SMS user IDs may lead to action being taken against you.

If you are copying and pasting your user ID and/or password, please ensure that spaces are not included at the end. If you enter an incorrect user ID or password three times, your account will be locked for approximately 20 minutes. If this occurs, you should try again later.

You must have Javascript enabled on your browser and a PDF viewer installed to use some functions in SMS.

[Forgotten your password?](#)

SMS log in

User ID:

Password:

[Cancel](#) [Log in](#)

- When logged in, on the left-hand menu, click 'Licence Summary, applications and services', then chose 'Request CoS/CAS allocation increase'

Home

Licence summary, applications and services

Manage Level 1 and 2 users

Request changes to licence details

Licence summary

PAYE References

Request CoS/CAS allocation increase

- Click the blue 'Add a request' button

Request additional CoS or CAS

The table below displays your current and outstanding requests for additional CoS or CAS. If you do not have any current allocations for which additional CoS or CAS can be requested, nothing will be displayed. Choose:

- **Add** to add a new request for the relevant route;
- **Edit** to edit a request that has been saved but not yet submitted;
- **Withdraw** to withdraw a request that has been previously submitted and is still outstanding; or
- **Cancel** if you do not want to continue.

When you have added your request(s) for additional CoS or CAS, choose **Submit**.

Any additional CoS/CAS requested and granted will expire on the same date as your current annual allocation in that route.

[Help \(opens in a new window\)](#)

	Route	Allocation limit	Allocation used	Allocation remaining	Date requested	Increase requested
Add a request	Skilled Worker	1	1	0		

- Add the number you would like to request for the year – this will need to be a realistic number, based on how many individuals you are likely to sponsor (*this can be increased at a later stage if you required more*)
- For reasoning, we would usually recommend something along the lines of – *'To recruit essential NHS workers who provide a vital service to the community, into Skilled Worker positions'* in addition to your rationale for this particular position being recruited to
- Then click the blue 'Save' button

Skilled Worker

Number requested:

Give reasons (2000 character limit):

Cancel **Save**

- On the next page, ensure you click the blue 'Submit' button in the right-hand corner

	Route	Allocation limit	Allocation used	Allocation remaining	Date requested	Increase requested
Edit	Skilled Worker	1	1	0		1

Cancel **Submit**

The next page will then be confirmation that the request has been submitted. These requests can take up to 18 weeks to be approved so should be submitted in advance. If there is an urgent need for quick approval, an additional fee can be paid to the Home Office for approval within 5 working days.

GP Trainee 4 Month Extension

Individuals that hold a Skilled Worker Visa as a GP Trainee may already have a four-month extension applied to their current grant of leave. This is intended to allow trainees extra time to secure work with an employer and arrange sponsorship with them. When assigning a CoS to a GP Trainee, NWSSP CoS Team include a note which confirms they are eligible so the extension should be automatically included when their visa is approved.

If the individual you are looking to sponsor has the four-month extension applied, this will allow them to work up to 20 hours per week whilst the practice is awaiting their sponsor licence and the new visa application is in progress.

The link below provides more information about this scheme.

[General Practitioner \(GP\) 4-month extension scheme | Medical Hub](#)