

Wessex GP School

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) - Skilled Worker Visa (Health and Care Worker Visa)

DISCLAIMER:

- This page was written by Dr Mostafa Abdallah, Salaried GP and International Medical Graduate (IMG) Support Fellow, Wessex GP School.
- The information here is correct to the best of my knowledge as an IMG GP who was on a visa during training and post-CCT. However, it is intended as a guide / overview only. The definitive sources of information are the gov.uk website and the NHSE Overseas Sponsorship team, both of whose details are provided below – it is those sources that should be referred to during any decision making, not this FAQ.
- To the best of our knowledge the information here is correct as at July 2025. However, details can change at any time due to changes in regulations by NHS England or the Home Office.

1. What is a Skilled Worker Visa?

A Skilled Worker visa allows individuals to work in the UK, in an eligible job, with an approved employer, while earning a minimum salary. It was previously known as the Tier 2 visa.

The Health and Care Worker Visa is a specific sub-type of Skilled Worker Visa that shares all the major requirements and rules except that individuals eligible for the Health and Care Worker Visa are exempt from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS).

2. How long do you need to be on a visa?

Under the Skilled Worker Visa rules, you need five years of continuous, sponsored work in the UK before becoming eligible to apply for ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain).

Indefinite leave to remain is how you settle in the UK. It's also called 'settlement'. It gives you the right to live, work and study here for as long as you like without the need to have a visa or a sponsor.

3. Who sponsors GP Registrars for this visa?

GP Registrars are sponsored by **NHS England (NHSE)** through the **National Overseas Sponsorship Team**, which ensures compliance with Home Office rules.

- [NHS Overseas Sponsorship Guidance](#)

4. What is the minimum salary requirement?

The minimum salary for the visa depends on the job type and the 'going rate.' The current guidelines are:

- GP Registrars must earn at least **£25,000 per year** to maintain visa status.

5. What factors can affect minimum salary compliance?

Salary might be affected by:

- Working less than full-time
- Out of programme situations
- Long-term sickness (over one month)
- Maternity or parental leave
- Authorised unpaid leave (including industrial action)

All these situations need to be reported to the NHSE sponsorship team as soon as possible to ensure your visa status remain valid.

6. Can GP Registrars on visas apply to work less than full time?

Yes, subject to the rules for the LTFT applications set by the Deanery.

In order to comply with the minimum visa salary requirement, the minimum LTFT percentage is:

- 60 % during ST1 and ST2
- 50 % during ST3 (although 50% is not usually allowed by the Deanery)

These figures may change at any time due to changes in the doctors' pay scale and the Home Office's minimal salary rules. Therefore, please check the update-to-date numbers on the NHSE sponsorship team website.

- [NHS Overseas Sponsorship Guidance](#)

7. How much does the Health and Care Worker visa cost?

- **Up to 3 years:** £304 per person
- **More than 3 years:** £590 per person
- Family members require separate applications and fees.
- These fees must be paid again if training is extended.
- This is under the standard pathway; for priority pathway (to get a decision in 5 working days) extra £500 per application need to be paid.

Example: A GP Registrar, his partner and 2 children would currently need to pay £1216 if the Registrar's training was extended even for one month under the standard pathway. (Plus, a further £2000 if priority pathway required.)

This will be payable again for any further training extensions, and then again to when switching employers post-CCT.

8. What financial proof is required when coming to UK for the first time to join GP training?

- At least £1,270 in your bank account (held for 28 consecutive days).
- If bringing family members:
 - £285 for a partner
 - £315 for one child
 - £200 for each additional child

Example: A family of 4 would need £3,006 in total.

9. Can I apply for public funds while on this visa?

No, Skilled Worker visa holders or their dependents cannot apply for public funds.

10. How can I extend my visa during training?

1. Complete the NHSE sponsorship online form with proof of CCT date change.
2. Upload required documents (passport, graduation certificate, visa, training proof).
3. Receive a Certificate of Sponsorship (COS) from NHSE.
4. Apply for a UK visa extension via the Home Office portal.
5. Upload any required documents and prove your identity.
6. Pay the required visa extension fees.
7. Wait for the decision.

11. What is the 4-month post CCT extension scheme?

The 4-month post CCT extension scheme allows newly qualified GPs to legally remain in the UK for an additional four months beyond the CCT date while looking for employment (and thus a new visa sponsor) and waiting to start work.

12. If my training is extended, can I use the four months to continue my training?

- No, you cannot carry on working in a training post past the end date of your CoS (your CCT date).
- If your training is extended, you must apply for a visa extension as per the steps in question 10 (above), and a new four months will be applied post the new CCT date.

13. Can I do locum work during the four-month extension?

- Yes, you are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week as a locum post CCT.

14. What if I cannot not find a new employer (ie a new visa sponsor) in four months?

- Unfortunately, you cannot extend your training visa beyond the four months post-CCT described above. Unless you become eligible to apply for settlement during that four months or are eligible for a different visa via any other route, you would no longer be eligible to remain in the UK at that point.
- The last day of the four months would then mark the last day of your legal stay in the UK.

References

- [UK Government – Health and Care Worker Visa](#)
- [NHS Overseas Sponsorship Guidance](#)