



Home Office

Points-based system sponsor licensing: premium customer service – Worker and Temporary Worker

Version 3.0

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About this guidance

This guidance tells caseworkers what premium customer service is, how a sponsor applies for these services and how to consider an application.

There are two levels of premium customer service:

- SME+ sponsor:
 - small and medium-sized enterprises (SME+) for Worker and Temporary Worker
- Premium sponsor:
 - all Worker and Temporary Worker

Worker and Temporary Worker sponsors can apply for, or renew, premium service or SME+ service if they:

- meet eligibility requirements
- pay the required fee

Sponsors can apply for, or renew, premium customer service using the function in their sponsorship management system (SMS) account and must pay the appropriate fee.

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors, email Migration Policy Unit.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance, you can email the Guidance Rules and Forms team.

Clearance and publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **3.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **11 October 2021**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Terminology has been updated to reflect the new points-based immigration system. Minor formatting errors have also been corrected.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Premium and SME+ customer service

This page explains what premium customer service is and how a sponsor applies for these services.

Worker and Temporary Worker requirements

Worker and Temporary Worker sponsors can apply for, or renew, a premium or SME+ customer service if they:

- are A-rated in all the routes on their licence
- have not been issued with a civil penalty in the last three years (and any penalties issued more than three years ago have been paid in full)
- fully satisfy a Home Office compliance inspection that they are at the required A-rated standard

You can refer to the [sponsorship guidance](#) for full details.

Sponsor eligibility

Premium service is available to all Worker and Temporary Worker sponsors who meet the above requirements, regardless of the size of the organisation.

SME+ service is available to Worker and Temporary Worker sponsors provided they meet the above requirements and, at the time of their initial sponsor licence application or licence renewal (whichever is the most recent), paid the [licence fee](#) for a small sponsor or a sponsor with charitable status.

Benefits of the service

If a sponsor is awarded premium or SME+ service, they will receive a [package of benefits](#) available to them for a period of 12 months from the date their premium customer service or SME+ service application is approved. To continue receiving the benefits after this period, the sponsor must apply to renew the service and pay the required fee.

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Applications

This page explains what happens when premium or SME+ service applications are received and provides an overview of the consideration process.

Searching for and allocating or assigning an application for premium or SME+ service

Sponsor applications are sent electronically from the sponsors Sponsorship Management System account and are received and stored in sponsor caseworking on Metastorm.

Managers must use the 'select and assign' function to search for and allocate a premium or SME+ application to a named caseworker. Caseworkers can use the same function to search for and assign an application to themselves.

Considering a Worker and Temporary Worker premium or SME+ customer service application

You must use this guidance along with the [sponsor guidance](#) to complete the validation checks before moving to the evaluation stage. The validation checks are listed in order in the Metastorm perform actions – Premium guide.

You must record the outcome of each check and complete the 'decision summary' in 'Metastorm perform actions'.

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Considering Worker and Temporary Worker premium or SME+ customer service applications

This page tells you how to consider an application for Worker and Temporary Worker premium or SME+ customer service.

Sponsors paying the SME+ service fee

If the sponsor has applied for SME+ service and paid the £8,000 fee, you must check the [fee](#) the sponsor paid on their original licence application or their renewal application, whichever is the most recent, to confirm they are eligible to apply for SME+. The fee paid is displayed in the payment tab on Metastorm.

If the sponsor paid the fee for a large sponsor on their current licence, the sponsor is not eligible for SME+ service. You must:

- reject the application using the 'Record Outcome' function on the bottom menu bar
- write to the sponsor using the 'Premium SME+ decision notification reject' letter
- refund the fee paid

Metastorm will automatically maintain the sponsor's rating.

Sponsor has paid the correct fee

If the sponsor has applied for premium customer service and paid the £25,000 fee or is eligible to apply for the SME+ service and paid the £8,000 fee, casework the application as normal.

Civil penalties

If the sponsor has either:

- been issued with any civil penalties within the last three years
- paid any civil penalties issued more than three years ago in full

you must:

- refuse the application using the 'Record Outcome' function on the bottom menu bar
- write to the sponsor using the 'Premium/SME+ decision notification refuse' letter
- refund the application fee

Metastorm will automatically maintain the sponsor rating.

Suspensions

You can determine the current status of the sponsor licence by viewing the managed sponsor licence screen. There will be a suspension case available to view in 'cases linked to sponsor'.

If the sponsor is suspended, you must:

- email the Suspensions and Revocations team to inform them that the sponsor has submitted an application for premium or SME+ service
- request that the Suspensions and Revocations team inform you when they conclude the case and what the outcome is
- bring forward (b/f) the case using the 'Set BF Date' function on the bottom menu bar and wait for the outcome

If outcome of the suspension case is either the sponsor is re-rated to B or the sponsor licence is due to be revoked, you must:

- check the Revocations Team has been notified that the sponsor licence has been revoked
- refuse the application using the 'Record Outcome' function on the bottom menu bar
- write to the sponsor using the 'Premium/SME+ service decision notification refuse' letter confirming that you cannot award premium or SME+ service
- refund the application fee

You must continue to casework the application if either:

- the sponsor is licensed and A-rated
- the suspension case outcome is that:
 - the suspension is lifted
 - the sponsor maintains their A-rating

Changes of circumstances and/or allocation requests

You must use the 'Select and Assign' function to check whether the sponsor has any outstanding change of circumstances or allocation requests. If they do, you must:

- re-assign the requests to your 'to do' list
- complete the requests
- consider what impact they may have on the application for premium or SME+ service

Key personnel

You must check whether either:

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If they haven't, you must, as appropriate:

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- b/f the case using the 'Set BF Date' function on the bottom menu bar and wait for the results of the checks

When available, you must review the results of the most recent check undertaken, which is within the required timeframe. If they indicate concerns around the key personnel and/or sponsor, you must:

- discuss the results of the checks with your line manager
- consider the impact on the overall licence and the application for premium or SME+ service
- agree the appropriate action to take, including whether to refer the sponsor for a compliance visit

Completed checks

If all initial checks are completed and a compliance visit is required, you must:

- use 'sponsor summary search' to review outstanding compliance activity
- review any outstanding change requests
- [check for special markers](#)
- discuss whether to [refer the sponsor for a compliance visit](#) with your line manager

If all initial checks are completed and there are no concerns, you must continue caseworking.

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Premium and SME+ service compliance visits

This page tells you how to consider if a compliance visit is required when a sponsor applies for premium or SME+ service.

Once you have completed the initial checks, you must check when the sponsor last had a compliance visit by looking at the 'Sponsor Visits' tab on the summary search screen.

If the Worker and Temporary Worker sponsor has had a compliance visit in the last three months, you must check the visit report to see if it holds enough information to confirm that the sponsor is:

- A-rated standard for Worker and Temporary Worker

If the visit report confirms that the sponsor is at the required standard, you must inform your manager and agree with them whether it is appropriate to refer for another visit at this point.

Similarly, if the visit report is unclear whether the sponsor is at the required standard, you must discuss with your manager and consider referring for another visit to clarify any points which are unclear.

If the visit report recommends a re-rate to B for a Worker or Temporary Worker sponsor but the action has not yet been undertaken, you must:

- email the 'Manage Rating' team to determine the progress on the re-rate
- b/f the case using the 'Set BF Date' function on the bottom menu bar and wait for the outcome

If the Worker or Temporary Worker sponsor has not had a compliance visit in the last three months, you must:

- open a 'visit case' in Metastorm using the 'Request Visit' function on the bottom menu bar and complete:
 - the required fields and set a visit target date
 - the referral form and add it to the case so that it appears in the correspondence tab
- place the premium or SME+ case into brought forward (b/f) using the 'Set BF Date' function on the bottom menu bar until the visit and report are completed

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Deciding a premium or SME+ customer service application

This page tells you how to make a decision on an application for premium or SME+ service.

Once the compliance officer has completed their visit, they will provide a visit report to the Sponsor Licensing Unit which will provide details of their findings.

If, after all representations made by the sponsor have been considered, either:

- the Manage Rating Team decide to downgrade the Worker or Temporary Worker sponsor from A to B with an action plan
- the Suspensions and Revocations Team decide to revoke the Worker or Temporary Worker licence

you must:

- refuse the application for premium or SME+ service using the 'Record Outcome' function on the bottom menu bar
- write to the sponsor using the 'Premium/SME+ decision notification refuse' letter
- refund the application fee

If either:

- the visit report confirms that the Worker and Temporary Worker sponsor is at the A-rated standard
- the Manage Rating or Suspension and Revocation team decide not to downgrade or revoke the sponsor

you must:

- confirm the visit outcome in the visit case in Metastorm
- appoint a licence manager and a senior account manager after discussion with line manager
- write to the sponsor using the 'Premium/SME+ decision notification approval' letter to confirm that premium or SME+ service has been awarded
- tell the sponsor who will be acting as their licence and senior account manager
- complete the premium or SME+ application and close the case
- consider adding automation for Worker and Temporary Worker sponsors

Related content

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Removing premium or SME+ customer service from a sponsor

This page tells caseworkers when to remove premium or SME+ service from a sponsor.

The premium or SME+ service expires after 12 months, if the sponsor has not applied for renewal.

The sponsor will be automatically re-rated to their previous status or rating on Metastorm.

You must remove premium or SME+ service from a sponsor if the:

- Worker or Temporary Worker sponsor is down rated to a B-rating with an action plan
- sponsor licence is revoked for a sponsor in any route

by raising a manual premium application and adding a 'Premium Cancellation' using the 'Record Outcome' function on the bottom menu bar.

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