



Home Office

PBS Worker and Temporary sponsor compliance visits

Version 17.0

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About this guidance

This guidance gives compliance officers guidance for pre and post licence sponsor compliance visits and assessments.

It gives guidance on the:

- areas you must consider when carrying out a visit
- processes you must follow before, during and after a visit

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 the PBS and Economic Migration team.

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.

Publication

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

- version **17.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **19 March 2026**

Changes from last version of this guidance

The main changes reflect Immigration Rules changes and removal of references to visits of Student sponsors. Other minor housekeeping changes have also been made.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Sponsor compliance visits

This section explains the principles of sponsorship compliance visits.

Sponsorship is based on 2 fundamental principles:

- those who benefit most directly from migration (that is the employers, education providers or other bodies who are bringing migrants to the UK) must play their part in making sure the system is not abused
- the Home Office needs to be sure those applying to come to the UK to do a job are eligible to do so, and a reputable employer or education provider genuinely wishes to employ or enrol them

Sponsor duties

A sponsor is responsible for fulfilling certain duties from the day their licence is granted until:

- [they surrender their licence](#)
- they let their licence lapse
- the Home Office revokes their licence

Their responsibility for a worker starts on the day they assign a certificate of sponsorship (CoS) and ends:

- when they notify the Home Office that they are no longer sponsoring the worker for any reason
- when the worker leaves the UK and their entry clearance or leave to remain expires
- when the worker granted further leave to remain with a different sponsor or in another immigration route

Key personnel

The sponsor is required to give certain responsibilities to members of their staff, some or all of whom will have access to the sponsorship management system (SMS) once they have been granted a licence. These are known as 'key personnel'. There are 4 roles:

- an authorising officer (AO)
- a key contact (KC)
- a level 1 user
- a level 2 user

These roles can be filled by the same person, or a combination of different people.

Each of the sponsor's key personnel must be:

- permanently based in the UK for the duration of the period that they fill the role appointed to them, unless the AO hasn't yet entered the UK under the UK Expansion Worker route
- a paid member of the sponsor's staff or be engaged by the sponsor as an office holder unless an exception applies

A sponsor must always have in place a level 1 user who is able to undertake their day-to-day sponsorship activities. Only level 1 and 2 users have access to the SMS. SMS users must not assign a CoS to themselves, a close relative or a partner. A close relative or partner is a:

- spouse or civil partner
- unmarried or same-sex partner
- parent or step-parent
- son or step-son
- daughter or step-daughter
- brother, step-brother or half-brother
- sister, step-sister or half-sister
- nephew, niece, cousin
- aunt or uncle
- father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law

If an AO or KC requires access to the SMS, they must be set up as a level 1 or 2 user as well.

Exceptions

Key personnel need not be a paid member of staff or engaged an office holder in the following circumstances:

- a level 1 or level 2 user can be an employee of a third-party organisation to whom the sponsor has contracted some or all of its human resources function to, however, the sponsor must have at least one level 1 user who is an employee, partner or director in the company
- a level 2 user can be a member of staff supplied by an employment agency
- an overarching sponsor licensed under Temporary Work - Government Authorised Exchange can appoint level 2 users within the organisations taking part in the exchange programme
- an insolvency professional who has been appointed because the company has gone into administration can fill any key personnel role
- a UK based representative can fill any key personnel role except the role of authorising officer

The Worker and Temporary Worker routes

The [Worker and Temporary Worker](#) routes that you will assess are:

The Worker routes are:

- [Skilled Worker](#)
- [Global Business Mobility](#) (including former Intra-Company routes):
 - Senior or Specialist Worker only
- [International Sportsperson](#)
- [T2 Minister of Religion](#)

The [Temporary Worker routes](#) are:

- [Creative Worker](#)
- [Charity Worker](#)
- [Religious Worker](#)
- [Government Authorised Exchange](#)
- [International Agreement](#)
- [Seasonal Worker](#)
- [Scale-up](#)
- [Global Business Mobility](#) (including former Intra-Company routes):
 - Graduate Trainee
 - Secondment Worker
 - Service Supplier
 - UK Expansion Worker

You will also assess the equivalent routes in the previous Points-Based System

Compliance officer role

It is important you understand the responsibility of your sponsor compliance role. You play a vital role in:

- assessing sponsors
- making sure the principles of sponsorship are maintained
- contributing to the Home Office priorities of:
 - securing our borders
 - reducing immigration
 - protecting citizens from terrorism

The main focus of your role is on the sponsor, with a secondary focus on the sponsored workers or students.

Assessing the sponsor

You are primarily assessing:

- that a licensed sponsor is meeting their sponsorship obligations
- that a prospective sponsor has the necessary systems and procedures in place to meet their sponsorship obligations
- the accuracy of information given on the sponsor licence application
- whether the sponsor is complying with their obligations to prevent illegal working

Your assessment will lead to one of the following outcomes:

- the sponsor licence application will be approved, or, in the case of an existing sponsor, they will maintain their current licence status
- refusal of the sponsor licence application or, in the case of an existing sponsor, they may:
 - have their allocation of CoS reduced or removed
 - be downgraded to a B-rating and be issued with a time-limited action plan
 - have their licence suspended
 - have their licence revoked

Assessing workers

In assessing sponsor compliance, you will come across information either through interviews or through information that the sponsor provides about workers. Based on this information, you may need to make more checks which might lead to you:

- reporting intelligence on potential abuse by a sponsored worker such as working contrary to the conditions of their leave
- providing intelligence to other parts of the Home Office about someone who may not be a sponsored worker but may be breaching the Immigration Rules

When completing the report, you must:

- state only facts without reliance on assumptions, inferences or opinions
- only refer to the information you gather about a sponsored worker or student in your assessment of the sponsor
- include any compliance issues about workers or students that do not relate to the assessment of the sponsor in a separate [supplementary evidence form](#)

The '[Sponsorship: guidance for employers and educators](#)' advises sponsors that they must act honestly in any dealings they have with the Home Office and other government departments. If the sponsor provides you with false information during your visit, or you obtain evidence that shows they are involved in dishonest activity, you must report this as a breach of their sponsorship obligations.

Related content

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Other visits

This page tells you about other visits you may have to undertake. These include:

- Visiting English language testing centres
- Visiting Life in the UK testing centres

Visiting Secure English language testing (SELT) centres

You will audit the test centre premises, processes and systems and report any non-compliance to the Home Office SELT team. You will undertake an audit on a purely observational basis. You will not interfere with any of the practices on the day nor will you advise centre staff of any processes that are not compliant with SELT requirements.

You will only audit the SELT test and must not audit a non-SELT test, which may take place in the same test centre.

You will arrive approximately an hour before the start of the test and introduce yourself to the test centre manager (or most senior person in the test centre on that day).

Visiting Life in the UK (LitUK) testing centres

You will audit the test centre premises, processes and systems and report any non-compliance to the UKVI LitUK team. You will undertake an audit on a purely observational basis. You will not interfere with any of the practices on the day nor will you advise centre staff of any processes that are not compliant with UKVI LitUK requirements.

Where clarification or further information is required, you will discuss this with the test centre manager or most senior person present. You will employ discretion, obtaining sufficient information to be satisfied that the test is being administered securely, whilst allowing the test centre to perform its usual functions.

You will arrive approximately 30 minutes before the start of the test and introduce yourself to the test centre manager (or most senior person in the test centre on that day).

Compliance visits

This section tells you the types of compliance visit you can carry out.

You will deal with 3 main types of visit:

- pre-licence assessment visit
- post-licence compliance visit
- SELT/LitUK Test Centre visits

Pre-licence assessment visit

A pre-licence assessment visit is visiting the premises of an employer that has applied for a sponsor licence, or has an existing sponsor licence, but is applying to add another route to it. Your visit findings will be considered by Sponsor Operations when they decide whether to grant the potential sponsor a licence or add another route to an existing licence.

When carrying out a pre-licence assessment visit, you must check:

- the potential sponsor has the necessary human resource (HR) systems in place to make sure that, if they are licensed, they will be able to carry out their sponsor duties
- the number of workers they want to sponsor is appropriate to the size and nature of the organisation
- whether there is any evidence that suggests the potential sponsor would pose a threat to immigration control
- any areas of concern that Sponsor Operations have identified as requiring further inspection relating to the potential sponsor's application, for example, verifying the original documents they failed to submit with their application
- if the potential sponsor has applied under a Skilled Worker route, that they will genuinely be able to offer employment that meets the Skilled Worker requirements at the correct skill and pay level

Unless they are applying to add another route to an existing licence, the sponsor will not yet be sponsoring workers. This means you will not be able to use information about workers to assess the sponsor's HR systems.

The sponsor may, however, be employing non-resident workers. If and when appropriate, you may check that their current processes for verifying the status of these workers are satisfactory.

Employers applying for sponsor licence must be able to demonstrate they have systems in place or ready, so they can meet their sponsorship duties.

Post-licence compliance visit

A post-licence compliance visit is to a sponsor who already holds a sponsor licence. You may be carrying out a visit because:

- Sponsor Operations have requested the visit in connection with:
 - intelligence about the organisation
 - the sponsor hitting a trigger point for the number of workers they have sponsored
- another unit in the Home Office has requested the visit as part of a joint operation
- the sponsor is B-rated and is therefore subject to an action plan that now requires assessment

- the sponsor has requested the visit

This list is not exhaustive but covers the main reasons you might need to carry out a post-licence compliance visit.

During a post-licence compliance visit, you must assess:

- the Worker or Temporary sponsor's HR systems to ensure they are meeting their sponsor duties
- whether the sponsor or the sponsor's activities pose a threat to immigration control
- whether the original number of CoS requested on the sponsor application or annual request is still justified
- whether those working with the sponsor are complying with any conditions of their leave to stay in the UK
- whether the sponsor continues to have an operating or trading presence
- whether sponsored workers were recruited to fill genuine vacancies which meet the requirements of the relevant immigration route in respect of skill level and pay all aspects of the tasking referral

Related content

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Announced and unannounced visits

This page tells you about announced and unannounced visits.

You can make an announced or unannounced visit, as the sponsor guidance makes clear to sponsors that they must allow Home Office staff access to any of their premises or sites under their control, on demand. Diplomatic or consular premises are exceptions to the requirement to provide access on demand.

If a sponsor refuses to allow you access on demand, the visit report should record that the sponsor was non-compliant, which may result in the sponsor licence being refused or revoked.

What you cannot do

You must not force entry to a sponsor's or potential sponsor's property, as you are not a warranted officer. You may politely remind the sponsor, or potential sponsor, that they agreed to provide access when they signed their application and that failure to do so would be seen as non-cooperation, which could lead to their application being refused or licence being revoked.

This gives the sponsor the opportunity to respond or to allow entry. You must clearly state any reason given by the sponsor for not allowing you entry in the visit report.

Unannounced visits

The compliance team must assess if the visit should be announced or unannounced. Visits should normally be unannounced, and, in particular, will be unannounced where:

- the request has specifically asked for the visit to be unannounced as it is intelligence led
- the compliance team consider an unannounced visit would achieve more accurate results – for example, for a sector-based risk reason
- there are serious concerns from previous visits that make the compliance team consider it more appropriate to visit unannounced

Secure English language and Life in the UK test centre visits are normally unannounced.

This list is not exhaustive.

Advantages of unannounced visits

An unannounced visit can be useful because it allows you to:

- see the sponsor in their normal working environment rather than allowing the possibility that the sponsor may have altered the environment for the purpose of assessment
- verify a permanent trading presence

Disadvantages of unannounced visits

The drawbacks can be that:

- the right personnel may not be there to speak to, so you are unable to collect all the required information
- the organisation may be closed

If the [key personnel](#) are unavailable when an unannounced visit is taking place, you should nevertheless continue with the visit. If Sponsor Operations require further information that means you need to speak to key personnel on the licence, you may have to re-visit or contact the sponsor by telephone, email or post after the visit to request additional information.

If the key personnel are not available during the visit you must speak to a relevant person, for example:

- an owner
- a director
- anyone involved in the day-to-day running of the sponsor's organisation

In all cases, you must seek proof of identity from the people you interview.

Announced visits

Announced visits allow certain benefits, for example, having the right person to speak to or having the full attention of the sponsor, since you were expected. There is a risk, however, that the sponsor may have altered the working environment in order to fit the sponsor duties they would not normally carry out, for example, by retrospectively completing a 'signing-in' book to give the impression an ongoing record of attendance is maintained when in fact it is not, or by making sure a sponsored worker is working as stated in their conditions of employment on that day when, ordinarily, they are engaged in lower skilled work.

You must advise the sponsor in advance what documents you need to see when going on an announced visit.

Deciding which visit is appropriate

To decide the most appropriate type of visit to carry out, you must consider:

- the specific tasking request
- the information provided about the sponsor
- the type of request

- the sponsor's rating

Announced visits: sponsor advises intention to surrender licence

If you announce a visit and the sponsor states they intend to surrender their licence, you must send the sponsor an email to confirm that:

- they have told you they wish to surrender their licence
- they must report this on the sponsor management system (SMS)
- they must send a hard copy of the surrender declaration form with an original signature within the next 10 working days to:

Sponsor Casework Operations
UK Visas and Immigration
Vulcan House Steel
Millsands
Sheffield
S3 8NS

Failure to comply with this requirement will result in a visit (announced or unannounced) which may see action taken against them. For sponsors in the Worker and Temporary Worker routes, this may result in them being subject to a cooling off period before they can reapply if we suspend their licence, as set out in the Worker and Temporary Worker [sponsor guidance](#).

The visit may take place even if the sponsor states that they intend to surrender their licence, for example, to obtain information about whether sponsored migrants are being compliant with the conditions of their leave.

If the compliance officer obtains the hard copy of the surrender declaration form during the visit, they should forward it to the address above.

Related content

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Illegal working

This page tells you what to consider about illegal working.

You may come across cases where, during a visit or after a sponsor provides information, you find a potential illegal worker. If you do, you must report the information to the Intelligence team using the online referral form.

Employers must comply with their record keeping duties for each worker they sponsor as set out in [Appendix D](#) of the sponsor guidance.

They also have a duty to comply with the law by not employing workers who do not have permission to work the hours or do the job in question, for example, a student who works for 30 hours a week during term time or a visitor with no right to work.

If you find an illegal worker on a sponsor's premises but the sponsor has carried out checks as recommended in the [illegal working guidelines](#), the sponsor will be classed by the Home Office as having a 'statutory excuse'. You should, however, still report your findings to any or all the following:

- Intelligence team
- Civil Penalties Compliance team
- Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE)

Students who have the right to work must provide an employer with evidence of their academic term and vacation dates for the duration of their studies in the UK so they can take employment. This allows an employer to show and retain a statutory excuse against a civil penalty.

The need for annual follow-up right to work checks was replaced with follow up checks at the point of expiry of leave, except where there:

- is no expiry date (for example with application registration cards (ARC))
- are no acceptable documents because there is an outstanding application or appeal with the Home Office

If the sponsor shows a statutory excuse, they must make a follow-up check 6 months after the date of the initial check. To show a statutory excuse against a civil penalty, copies taken must be clear, and a record of the date the sponsor made the check must also be kept.

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Safeguarding and other immigration issues

This page tells you about other immigration issues you must deal with if you find them during or after a visit.

You must be aware of the following situations which you may encounter. While it may be rare to come across one of these situations during a visit, you must be aware of the basic principles.

Human trafficking and modern slavery

Modern slavery includes human trafficking, slavery, servitude and forced and compulsory labour.

Since 1 April 2009, the UK has been bound by the Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings. The purpose of the convention is to:

- prevent and combat trafficking of human beings
- identify and protect victims of trafficking and to safeguard their rights
- promote international cooperation against trafficking

If you suspect someone is a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery, you must refer them to the relevant competent authority.

Safeguarding children

The Home Office has a duty regarding the welfare of children as stipulated in [Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009](#).

Other government regulations

If you suspect a sponsor is in breach of other government regulations such as the National Minimum Wage or health and safety, you must email the Work Central Risk Hub who will share the information with the relevant agencies and government departments.

Related content

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Allocation of visits

This page tells you about the process for allocating visits.

Operational Support Team (OST)

All requests for sponsor visits are received by OST through a new email inbox. They are triaged, prioritised and given to a research officer.

Research officers

Research officers allocate the visit to regional higher executive officer (HEO) operations managers based on their team's pre-declared weekly capacity to undertake visits. They will:

- undertake [background checks](#) on the sponsor, the authorising officer and any level 1 users
- [risk assess](#) the visit

Regional HEO operations managers

Regional HEO operations managers notify OST of their compliance officer's weekly capacity to undertake visits 3 weeks in advance. They are then allocated visits accordingly. Once received, visits are then allocated to compliance officers (COs) within 48 hours of receiving the case on Jira.

Arranging visits

Once a visit has been allocated to COs, they are responsible for ensuring the visit is undertaken before or during the weekly slot identified by OST. This makes sure that reports can be sent within target dates. Failure to undertake the visit before or within the weekly slot will not reduce your allocation of visits in future weeks.

If the visit can't be completed or is otherwise delayed, you must rearrange it during the same week or as soon afterwards as you can.

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Health and safety

This page tells you what health and safety issues to consider when planning a visit.

You must read and take account of 'Safe systems of work' (appendix A of the sponsorship national visits risk assessment), which:

- outlines the minimum level of pre-visit checks needed
- tells you the considerations needed to see if a visit is suitable for one person to carry out on their own
- explains the need to carry out 'dynamic risk assessments'

Health and safety concerns

You must familiarise yourself with the following health and safety guidelines issued by the Home Office:

- driving on official duty
- fire, bomb and emergency procedures
- first aid
- bullying and harassment
- homeworking
- lone working
- smoking

When you plan a visit, you must take into account all of the following safety measures:

- if you are concerned about health and safety, you must discuss this with your line manager before you go
- you must keep to local reporting procedures
- you must not start a visit without telephoning your duty office or line manager before you enter the premises you are visiting
- you must call your duty office or line manager after the visit but only when you have safely left the visit premises:
 - you should ensure you are aware of your duty office's procedure for phoning in and out of a visit before the visit takes place
- if you are on a visit and have any health and safety concerns, you must stop the visit at the earliest possible opportunity, and make sure you contact your line manager or duty office immediately afterwards to discuss the details

Personal safety training

You must not carry out a sponsor visit until you have completed personal safety training Level 2 (PSTs). You must also go through periodic refresher training to maintain your PST certification. To find out more information on how to book a course, ask your line manager.

Gifts and hospitality

You must not accept gifts, hospitality or rewards that do not meet the Home Office's procedures and processes. You must always be aware of the potential for either actual or perceived conflicts of interest which could lead to charges of bias or corruption. Where the hospitality offered is clearly trivial e.g. minor refreshments such as a cup of coffee, you do not need to report it. You must record any gifts or hospitality that is offered or received using the gifts form or the hospitality form.

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Pre-visit guidelines

This section tells you the guidelines to be followed before you carry out a visit.

It is important that you gather the relevant information and are well prepared for the visit and there are various actions you must take. You must:

- ensure a risk assessment has been carried out following the processes outlined in both the risk assessment section and safe systems of work of the Sponsorship national visits risk assessment:
 - this includes a mandatory trading presence check and a check for any relevant current or past history on the PRONTO database
 - these 2 checks are in the Operating mandate making them compulsory for every visit
- ensure a mandatory check with both the local police in the relevant area and the local Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) team has been done to provide additional information to the risk assessment where any of the following apply:
 - where intelligence concerns exist and identify a specific risk or risks that could be mitigated
 - where history / suspicion of criminal activity is present
 - where a PRONTO check results in information of concern
 - where there is a history of non-compliance
 - where a visit is to an organisation in the agriculture sector
 - where a visit is to a private further education or English language college (but not international study centres run in partnership with universities)
 - where a visit occurs outside normal business hours (0900-1700)
 - where it is apparent that the business premises are of a domestic nature, unless authorised by a Sponsor Compliance Network operations manager
 - where the location is in a current area of concern
 - any visits to sectors for which a risk profile document exists
 - any visits to clothing retailers, manufacturers, distributors, warehouses that are not a common household name
- check the sponsor referral form where applicable to see if any specific information was requested
- make sure any pre-visit checks have been done
- [consider any religious, belief or cultural factors](#) which may be relevant to your visit

Related content

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Pre-visit sponsor checks

This page tells you what sponsor checks must have been made before carrying out a licensing visit.

Before you receive the visit case on Jira, the Operational Support Team will have researched:

- details of the key contact, authorising officer and representative
- the location of the premises
- the relevant licence history of the sponsor and any previous or current action plans
- the sponsor's status on Metastorm
- notes on Metastorm to verify there is no litigation action currently being carried out by or against the sponsor
- any casework marker on Metastorm

You will need to:

- make sure you understand any extra information asked for on the visit referral form or compliance assessment tool (CAT) form:
 - if not, contact your line manager
- read any previous visit reports to think about any potential issues before the visit
- for post-licence visits, verify the sponsored workers using the CoS management information which is saved alongside the CAT form

Related content

[Contents](#)

Worker checks

This page tells you what worker checks you need to make when you visit a sponsor.

Worker file checks

You must check:

- at least 10% of sponsored worker files
- a minimum 3 files where there are 3 or more workers
- all files where there are fewer than 3 workers
- a minimum 15 sponsored worker files where there are over 150 sponsored workers (seek guidance from your line manager or referrer)

Right to work checks

You must check right to work documentation for:

- 40% where there are 1 to 50 workers
- a minimum of 3 workers where there are 3 to 9 sponsored workers
- all sponsored workers where there are fewer than 3
- a minimum of 25% where there are 51 to 150 sponsored workers
- 10% where there are over 150 sponsored workers (seek guidance from your line manager or referrer)

You can apply discretion to the above minima on a case-by-case basis provided your decision can be operationally justified. You must refer to your line manager if you are unsure.

Worker interviews

As a guide, where there are fewer than 3 sponsored workers, all must be interviewed.

Where there are 3 or more sponsored workers, you should normally interview a minimum of 3 to corroborate sponsor accounts and check for non-compliance.

Where your initial batch of 3 interviews have identified new breaches or produced evidence which may justify further compliance action, you must conduct more interviews. This should not ordinarily exceed 10 interviews, but may need to in exceptional circumstances, or where instructed by the Sponsor Assurance and Investigations team.

Although discretion can be applied to the above minima on a case-by-case basis provided the decision can be operationally justified, you must always interview workers, as required, when you are specifically tasked to do so. In the latter case, if workers are not available for interview on the date of your visit, you must arrange a revisit and not submit a report until that has happened.

Giving early notice

You may inform the sponsor in advance of the visit of any sponsored worker you may wish to interview, if you have no concerns about doing so and you believe it will ensure they are present to interview. If you want to interview a particular person, you must check their immigration status and, if appropriate, immigration history on Atlas.

You may also request any documents you require to be electronically sent 48 hours before the visit start time.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Risk assessments

This section tells you the checks you must make for before you carry out a sponsor pre-licence assessment visit.

Checks already made by sponsor operations

Sponsor Operations will have already made checks with the following before they ask for a pre-licence assessment visit:

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

Any adverse information would either:

- stop them from sending the referral
- be noted on the referral for you to consider before the visit

Checks already made by Sponsor Compliance and Workflow

The following checks are made as part of the tasking process:

- previous workflow activity
- PRONTO database, which must not be used if it is more than 4 weeks old
- referral notice or civil penalty check
- Single Intelligence Platform (SIP) check, which must not be used if it is more than 4 weeks old
- relevant planning permission:
 - where Workflow has access, they carry out a check – since this is not always possible, Workflow may ask officers to carry out checks on visits
 - if Workflow has already got this information, officers must still identify, get the evidence and verify
- stakeholder checks by the Professional Enablers team
- asylum data analysed

Officers must consider whether pre-visit checks are out of date. It is recommended, as a maximum, to only use them if they are less than 4 weeks old.

Important checks you must make before the visit

UK Visas and Immigration's (UKVI's) operating mandate defines the minimum mandatory checks which must be carried out across all UKVI business areas. It states that before carrying out any visit, you must ensure:

- PRONTO has been checked to make sure there are no planned enforcement visits or intelligence recorded:
 - you must contact the local enforcement unit if any information or planned enforcement action is recorded, to confirm whether the visit can still go ahead
- a search for a web presence has been done

You must refer to the sponsorship national visits risk assessment, Safe systems of work (appendix A), to find out if any further checks are needed.

Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE) team

If the sponsorship national visits risk assessment, Safe systems of work (appendix A), shows an ICE team check is needed, you must ensure:

- the details of the visit are recorded on the ICE and police check form
- it has been sent to the relevant ICE team

Related content

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Religious, belief and cultural considerations

This page tells you what religious, belief and cultural considerations you must make before carrying out a sponsor visit.

You will carry out visits to a large range of different types of sponsors or potential sponsors. Some of these sponsors may have cultural, religious or belief requirements you will need to consider when you plan or carry out a visit.

These guidelines are not an exhaustive list. You are expected to consider the needs attached to each individual visit on its own merit.

You must consider:

- clothing when visiting a religious organisation:
 - female officers may need to make sure their upper body, legs or hair are covered
 - male officers may be required to cover their heads and hair in some religious organisations
- footwear when walking into some buildings, or areas of a building, as it may be culturally insensitive to wear shoes – you must:
 - ask if you are required to take off your shoes before you enter a building or a room
 - take the lead from the sponsor

This page does not attempt to list every possible scenario that you may come across. You must take a common-sense approach during any visit and, where you are unsure of the customs, ask the person you are visiting.

Unannounced visits

You are not recommended to make unannounced visits to religious premises because of the potential sensitive nature of the visit. To make an unannounced visit to religious premises, you must:

- seek a minimum of senior executive officer (SEO) approval
- be able to justify why the visit should be unannounced

Related content

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Route specific considerations

This section tells you some of the things to consider when carrying out a route specific visit. It does not replace the sponsor guidance and you must still read, learn and take account of the sponsor requirements. This section tells you some of the areas of the sponsor guidance that you must consider when carrying out a sponsor visit.

Some of the sponsor requirements only apply to some sponsors and some routes. It is important you still consider compliance with the [sponsor duties](#).

Resident labour market test (RLMT)

During a visit to a Worker and Temporary Worker sponsor, you must find out whether or not the sponsor has attempted to find a resident worker before offering a position to a non-resident worker, if appropriate (see [exemptions](#)). This involves advertising the job as set out in the [sponsor guidance for employers](#).

To make sure the sponsor has followed the correct procedures, you must read the:

- relevant sections of [the Immigration Rules](#) for the job role
- relevant sections in the [sponsor guidance](#) about carrying out an RLMT
- [keeping documents guidance in appendix D](#) of the sponsor guidance

The information in the codes of practice were updated on the 6 April 2014 and 11 March 2024 with revised standard occupation classification (SOC) codes, which meant that some SOC codes information changed. You must refer to the [sponsor guidance for employers and educators](#) for full details.

The sponsor must not make an offer of employment to a worker until they have completed the RLMT where this is required. If you find evidence the sponsor has made a job offer before the RLMT was completed, you must give the sponsor a 'Not met' under area 3 of the human resource systems on the visit report form.

The justification is that the sponsor could not have genuinely been trying to find a resident worker in the period between the offer of employment and the end of the RLMT period.

Exemptions

Before you carry out a visit, you must make yourself aware of the RLMT exemptions set out in the sponsor guidance. These exemptions include:

- specific creative sector jobs
- jobs in a shortage occupation before December 1, 2020 in [the Immigration Rules](#), other than as a nurse, with the occupation code '2231Nurses', which are not exempt and do require a RLMT
- Skilled Worker roles

- intra-company transfer routes
- Global Business Mobility routes
- supernumerary research positions before December 1, 2020
- charity workers
- overseas government employees
- where the worker has, or was last granted, permission to stay in the UK under:
 - Tier 1 (Post-study work)
 - Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur)
 - Tier 1 (Entrepreneur)
 - Tier 2, Tier 5, Skilled Worker or in a Temporary Worker route as a doctor or dentist in speciality training applying for further leave to complete their training, including where they are returning from an out of programme experience
- where the worker had previously been sponsored to work for a higher education institution and is returning to resume their post following a period of academic leave
- where the worker will be sponsored as a doctor in speciality training where their salary, and the cost of their training is being met by the government of another country under an agreement with that country and the UK government
- where the gross annual salary package was £159,600 or above in Tier 2 (General), however, between:
 - 6 April 2015 and 5 April 2017, it must have been £155,300 or more
 - 6 April 2014 and 5 April 2015, it must have been £153,500 or more
 - 6 April 2013 and 5 April 2014, it must have been £152,100 or more
 - 6 April 2012 and 5 April 2013, it must have been £150,000 or more
- from 11 January 2017, where the worker has, or was last granted, permission to stay in the UK as a Tier 4 migrant or Student, and they have:
 - completed a course of study leading to (having sat all exams and presented all academic papers) either a UK recognised bachelor or postgraduate degree or a UK postgraduate certificate in education
 - completed a minimum of 12 months' study in the UK towards a UK PhD

Related content

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Skilled Worker

This page tells you what you must consider on a visit to a Skilled Worker sponsor.

[Minimum skill level](#)

[Skill level exceptions in Tier 2 \(General\)](#)

[Minimum salary](#)

[Experience based rates of pay](#)

[Reductions in salary](#)

[Certificates of sponsorship: restricted and unrestricted](#)

[Genuine employment assessments](#)

Minimum skill level

This sponsorship route is for skilled workers only. During a sponsor visit, you must check that all workers sponsored under are filling a job vacancy in a role listed as eligible for the Skilled Worker route in [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#).

Skill level exceptions in Tier 2 (General)

If the sponsor holds a licence under which they still sponsor individuals granted leave under the Tier 2 (General) route prior to 1 December 2020, job vacancies must have been at graduate level unless there is a [skill level exemption](#). Graduate level equates to Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) level 6. You must remember that this does not mean the worker has to have a degree level education, but the work they do must be at graduate level.

For those with leave granted before 6 April 2011, the minimum level was set at RQF level 3. A sponsor could still issue a certificate of sponsorship (CoS) for a migrant at this level provided:

- the worker's leave was granted:
 - under a Tier 2 (General) before 6 April 2011
 - under a work permit
 - to a representative of overseas newspaper, news agency or broadcasting organisation
 - to a member of operational ground staff of an overseas airline
 - to a Jewish Agency employee
- the worker has not been granted leave in any other route

This transitional arrangement for extension and change of employment applications for workers sponsored before 6 April 2011 at RQF level 3 only applied to CoS assigned before 6 April 2017.

From 6 April 2011, the skill level was raised to RQF level 4 (or the equivalent in Scotland), and from 14 June 2012, it was raised again to RQF level 6 (or the equivalent in Scotland).

This transitional arrangement for extension and change of employment applications for workers sponsored between 6 April 2011 and 13 June 2013 at RQF level 4 only applied to CoS assigned before 6 July 2018.

It remained at RQF level 4 (or the equivalent in Scotland), however, for jobs in a [shortage occupation](#) or are a creative sector occupation as listed in the [Worker and Temporary Worker sponsor guidance](#).

Minimum salary

You must ensure that any worker sponsored under the Skilled Worker route is paid in line with the salary rates set out in [Appendix SW to the Immigration Rules](#). The going rates are set out in Tables 1, 1a, 2, 2a, 2aa, 3 and 3a of Appendix Skilled Occupations.

The worker must be paid at least one of the following:

- equal to or exceed both £41,700 per year and the going rate for the occupation code
- equal to or exceed both £37,500 per year and 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a subject relevant to the job
- equal to or exceed both £33,400 per year and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subject relevant to the job
- equal to or exceed both £33,400 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job is listed in the [Immigration Salary List](#)
- equal to or exceed both £33,400 per year and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is a new entrant at the start of their career
- equal to or exceed both £31,300 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- equal to or exceed both £28,200 per year and 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they have a PhD in a subject relevant to the job or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- equal to or exceed both £25,000 per year and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they have a PhD in a STEM subject relevant to the job or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- equal to or exceed both £25,000 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and it is listed in the [Immigration Salary List](#) or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- equal to or exceed both £25,000 per year and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they are a new entrant at the start of their career or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- equal to or exceed both £25,000 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a job in a health or education listed in Table 3 of [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#)

For Skilled Workers granted permission under the Rules between 10 April 2025 and 21 July 2025, the salary thresholds were:

- £38,700 per year and the going rate for the occupation code
- £34,830 per year 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a subject relevant to the job
- £30,960 per year and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subject relevant to the job
- £30,960 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job is listed in the [Immigration Salary List](#)
- £30,960 per year and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is a new entrant at the start of their career
- £29,000 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £26,100 per year and 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they have a PhD in a subject relevant to the job or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £25,000 per year and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they have a PhD in a STEM subject relevant to the job or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £25,000 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and it is listed in the [Immigration Salary List](#) or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £25,000 per year and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they are a new entrant at the start of their career or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £25,000 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a job in a health or education listed in Table 3 of [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#)

For Skilled Workers granted permission under the Rules between 4 April 2024 and 9 April 2025, the salary thresholds were:

- £38,700 per year, £15.88 per hour and the going rate for the occupation code
- £34,830 per year, £15.88 per hour and 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a subject relevant to the job
- £30,960 per year, £15.88 per hour and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subject relevant to the job
- £30,960 per year, £15.88 per hour and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job is listed in the [Immigration Salary List](#)
- £30,960 per year, £15.88 per hour and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is a new entrant at the start of their career
- £29,000 per year, £11.90 per hour and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)

- £26,100 per year, £11.90 per hour and 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they have a PhD in a subject relevant to the job or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £23,200 per year, £11.90 per hour and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they have a PhD in a STEM subject relevant to the job or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £23,200 per year, £11.90 per hour and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and it is listed in the [Immigration Salary List](#) or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £23,200 per year and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a [Health and Care ASHE salary job](#) and they are a new entrant at the start of their career or qualifies under the [transitional provision](#)
- £23,200 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is doing a job in a health or education listed in Table 3 of [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#)

For Skilled Workers granted permission under the Rules between 13 April 2023 and 3 April 2024, the salary thresholds were:

- £26,200 per year, the going rate for the occupation code and £10.75 per hour
- £23,580 per year, £10.75 per hour and 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a subject relevant to the job
- £20,960 per year, £10.75 per hour and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subject relevant to the job
- £20,960 per year, £10.75 per hour and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job is a listed shortage occupation
- £20,960 per year, £10.75 per hour and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is a new entrant to the labour market
- £20,960 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job in a listed health or education occupation

Between 1 April 2021 and 12 April 2023 these were:

- £25,600 per year, the going rate for the occupation code and £10.10 per hour
- £23,040 per year, £10.10 per hour and 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a subject relevant to the job
- £20,480 per year, £10.10 per hour and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subject relevant to the job
- £20,480 per year, £10.10 per hour and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job is a listed shortage occupation
- £20,480 per year, £10.10 per hour and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is a new entrant to the labour market
- £20,480 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job in a listed health or education occupation

Before 1 April 2021 these were:

- £25,600 per year and the going rate for the occupation code
- £23,040 per year and 90% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a subject relevant to the job
- £20,480 per year and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker has a PhD in a Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics (STEM) subject relevant to the job
- £20,480 per year and 80% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job is a listed shortage occupation
- £20,480 per year and 70% of the going rate for the occupation code if the worker is a new entrant to the labour market
- £20,480 per year and the going rate for the occupation code if the worker's job is in a listed health or education occupation

For Tier 2 (General), the sponsor must be paying the worker at least the minimum appropriate rate for the job stated in [Appendix Skilled Occupations of the Immigration Rules](#) or £30,000 per annum (unless an exception listed in [Appendix A of the Immigration Rules](#) applied), whichever is the higher.

The minimum salary level is for gross salary packages including any guaranteed bonuses and any allowances permitted, as detailed in the [sponsor guidance for employers](#). It is important you recognise that bonuses must be 'guaranteed' to qualify. Allowances must also have been available to settled workers. You can check this by asking to see the contract of employment or payslips, for example.

Transitional provision from 4 April 2024

This transitional provision applies to workers who met all of the following requirements:

- they were granted permission as a Skilled Worker under the Immigration Rules in force before 4 April 2024
- they had continuous permission as a Skilled Worker since then (continuous permission may include periods without permission that were disregarded under paragraph 39E of the Immigration Rules)
- they are being sponsored for a job in an eligible occupation listed in Table 2 or 2a of Appendix Skilled Occupations
- if being sponsored for a job in Table 2a, they were sponsored by the sponsor in their most recent grant of permission and that sponsorship continued

This transitional provision applies to applications for permission made before 4 April 2030, after which it will end.

New entrants

To qualify as a 'new entrant', the worker must have met one of the following requirements:

- the applicant was under the age of 26 on the date they applied for entry clearance or permission to stay
- the job offer was a postdoctoral position in any of the following occupation codes:
 - 2111 Chemical scientists
 - 2112 Biological scientists
 - 2113 Biochemists and biomedical scientists
 - 2114 Physical scientists
 - 2115 Social and humanities scientists
 - 2119 Natural and social science professionals not elsewhere classified
 - 2162 Other researchers, unspecified discipline
 - 2311 Higher education teaching professionals
- (Before 4 April 2024 these were:
 - 2111 Chemical scientists
 - 2112 Biological scientists and biochemists
 - 2113 Physical scientists
 - 2114 Social and humanities scientists
 - 2119 Natural and social science professionals not elsewhere classified
 - 2311 Higher education teaching professionals)
- the job offer was in a [UK-regulated profession](#) and the worker is working towards a recognised professional qualification for that profession
- the worker is working towards full registration or chartered status with the relevant professional body for the job they are being sponsored for
- the worker applied for permission to stay and their most recent permission was as a Graduate or a Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) Migrant
- the worker was a recent UK graduate and met the additional requirements below

To qualify as a new entrant on the basis of recent graduate-level study, the worker must have met all of the following conditions:

- their most recent permission must have been as a Student or Tier 4 (General) Migrant
- that permission must have expired less than 2 years before the date of application
- in that permission (or any previous permission as a Student or a Tier 4 (General) Migrant, the worker was sponsored to study any of the following:
 - a UK bachelor's degree
 - a UK master's degree
 - a UK PhD or other doctoral qualification
 - a Postgraduate Certificate in Education
 - a Professional Graduate Diploma of Education
- the worker either:
 - must have completed the relevant course mentioned above

- applied no more than 3 months before they were expected to complete the relevant course above
- was studying a PhD and had completed at least 12 months' study in the UK towards that PhD

Workers do not qualify as a new entrant if granting their application would have meant their permission as a Skilled Worker, Tier 2 Migrant and/or Graduate, would exceed 4 years in total. This applies whether or not the 4 years is continuous or cumulative.

Previously, from 6 April 2013, rates of pay for 'new starters' and 'experienced staff' were introduced.

Where the worker applied under Tier 2 to stay in the UK beyond 3 years and one month, the 'experienced rate' must have been paid.

The new entrant rate could only be paid if the worker was:

- recruited using a milkround (the process of recruiters attending graduate careers fairs and presentations located at various universities)
- switching into Tier 2 (General) from Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur), Tier 1 (Post-study Work) or Tier 4 and its predecessor routes
- applying under the Tier 2 (Intra-Company Transfer) – graduate trainee sub category
- under the age of 26 on the date of their application for Tier 2 leave

In all other cases, the 'experienced rate' must have been paid.

As of 6 April 2014, sponsors under Tier 2 (General) and Tier 2 (Intra-Company Transfer) long-term staff sub category were able to assign a CoS for any period up to 5 years. In these instances, the 'experienced salary rate' must have been paid from the moment the worker started work with the sponsor.

The sponsor may pay a worker more than stated on the CoS, however, you must consider whether there would have been a breach of the resident labour market test (RLMT) in these instances. Be aware that the sponsor guidance does not specify a limit in terms of an increase in salary. You would expect to see this if the worker has:

- been employed for some time
- gained a promotion
- started in a new job which falls under the same standard occupational classification (SOC) code and does not require a change of employment application to be made

Reductions in salary

If the sponsor decides to reduce a worker's salary package to a lower rate than that stated on the CoS after they have started employment, the new rate must meet the

current going rate requirements, which are stated in [Appendix Skilled Occupations of the Immigration Rules, and the minimum threshold](#).

Temporary reductions in salary to the Covid 19 pandemic were permitted providing:

- the reduction is part of a company-wide policy to avoid redundancies, under which migrant workers treated no differently to resident workers
- the worker continues to be paid at least 80% of their salary, up to £2,500 per month (in line with Government support for businesses under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which ran between March 2020 and October 2021)
- the reduction is temporary and the worker's pay will return to at least the level it was, after the arrangements end

If a reduction in salary is due to the worker being absent from work without pay for one calendar month or more in total during any calendar year (1 January to 31 December), either as a single period of unpaid leave or an accumulation of shorter periods, the sponsor must make a sponsor management system (SMS) report, unless the absence is due to one or more of the following reasons:

- statutory maternity leave
- statutory paternity leave
- statutory parental leave
- statutory shared parental leave
- statutory neonatal care leave
- statutory adoption leave
- sick leave
- assisting with a national or international humanitarian or environmental crisis overseas, provided you agreed to the absence for that purpose
- taking part in legally organised industrial action
- jury service
- attending court as a witness

Certificates of sponsorship: defined and undefined

Certificates of sponsorship (CoS) may be defined or undefined (previously restricted or unrestricted). You must check that the right types of CoS have been issued during a sponsor visit.

Defined and restricted certificates of sponsorship

A defined CoS is required for all workers who want to apply for entry clearance.

Before 1 December 2020, a restricted CoS was required for:

- new hires earning under £159,600 per year coming to work in the UK from overseas
- the dependant of a worker who was last granted leave under Tier 4, where that dependant is already in the UK and wishes to switch into Tier 2 (General) and was paid less than £159,600

A restricted CoS was not required if the applicant was a Croatian national subject to worker authorisation before 1 July 2018.

The sponsor must gain permission from the Home Office before assigning a defined CoS. They must include details about the position being applied for, such as the job and salary, on the CoS application.

Assigning an undefined or unrestricted CoS where a defined or restricted one is or was required is a breach of the sponsor's duties.

When you carry out a visit, if you come across a worker who is not doing the job stated on the defined or restricted CoS application or not being paid at least the appropriate rate as described in the sponsor guidance (this includes the minimum appropriate salary and the appropriate rate for the job as stated in [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#) or [appendix J of the Immigration Rules](#)), you must mark this as a breach on the visit record.

There are some occasions where the sponsor may need to change some of the details they gave on a defined or restricted CoS application. All of the information they give in a defined or restricted CoS application is 'locked down' and cannot be amended on the defined or restricted CoS itself. By adding a sponsor note to the defined or restricted CoS, however, they can change any of the following:

- a salary decrease where:
 - the rate is still at or above the appropriate rate for the job
 - the figure would have scored the same number of points in the relevant table given in the sponsor guidance
 - the rate is within any salary range quoted in the associated job advertisement, or no resident labour market test (RLMT) was required
- a salary increase where the salary is still within the range quoted on the job advert, if an RLMT was required
- a change to start and end date
- a change to the weekly working hours

Where an RLMT was required, the sponsor must also have stated in the sponsor note the salary range that was advertised.

Undefined or unrestricted certificates of sponsorship

Sponsors do not need permission in advance to assign a CoS under Skilled Worker, if the worker is applying for permission to stay from within the UK. Similarly, in Tier 2 (General), the sponsor did not need advanced permission if the worker was:

- newly hired, coming from overseas and earning £159,600 or more a year
- already in the UK with valid leave under Tier 2 (General)
- already in the UK under another immigration route, with valid leave, and is entitled to switch into Tier 2 (General) - this excludes a dependent of a Tier 4 migrant earning less than £159,600 who would need a restricted CoS

- a Croatian national subject to worker authorisation before 1 July 2018.

When you carry out a visit, if you come across a worker who is not doing the role stated on the undefined or unrestricted CoS or is not being paid at least the appropriate rate as described in the sponsor guidance (this includes the minimum appropriate salary and the appropriate rate for the job as stated in [Appendix Skilled Worker](#) or [appendix J of the Immigration Rules](#)), you must mark this as a breach on the visit record.

You must also check the sponsor has not assigned an undefined or unrestricted CoS to a worker who should have had a restricted one. To do so is a breach of the terms and conditions of their licence and you must mark them down under area 5 of the 'human resource systems' on the visit report for incorrectly issuing a CoS and as a risk to immigration control.

Using a defined or restricted CoS to fill any vacancy other than the one set out in the application for that CoS is a breach of the sponsor guidance and you must mark a sponsor down under area 5 of the human resource systems in these cases.

All applications related to defined or restricted CoS are held on the 'correspondence tab' on Metastorm. The decision outcome of the application is contained in the decision letter.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Genuine employment assessments

This page tells you about assessing genuine employment of Skilled Workers.

Prospective and existing sponsors must satisfy the genuine employment criteria to be granted or retain their sponsor licence.

Process

Each compliance visit which requires a credibility assessment will follow the process below:

1. The caseworker will produce the visit case and process it in the normal way, highlighting in the 'additional notes' field the credibility concerns.
2. The caseworker will use the following numbering in the visit priority box:
 - 1 - credibility
 - 2 - normal
 - 3 – urgent
3. The case will be given to a trained interview officer.
4. The lead compliance officer will ask their second trained interview officer to go with them and help on the visit.
5. The lead officer will prepare for, and carry out, the visit.
6. The lead officer will write the report on the standard report template.
7. The lead officer will save the report in the shared folder 'Sponsor Specific Files'

Related content

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T2 Minister of Religion

This page tells you what to consider when carrying out a sponsor visit for T2 Minister of Religion.

This route can be complex. The large numbers of religions and belief systems that exist in the UK have varying titles and names for the organisation's workers. For the purpose of immigration control, the Home Office collectively groups individuals that form part of a particular role or job description as ministers of religion. It is important you consult the [sponsor guidance for employers](#) when assessing the criteria.

The role must not be mainly clerical or administrative (unless it is a senior post, for example, the financial controller) but you must not make assumptions about a sponsored worker under this route based on a job title.

The worker:

- must not undertake any other employment unless it meets the rules for supplementary employment
- must be qualified to do the job in question
- must only work at locations given on the certificate of sponsorship, or reported to us by the sponsor through the sponsor management system (SMS)
- until 1 December 2020, must not have displaced or denied the opportunity to a suitably qualified settled worker
- can be a novice under training but cannot be a student working towards a qualification

Preaching and pastoral work

The T2 Minister of Religion route includes anyone undertaking preaching and pastoral work. Pastoral duties may include:

- leading worship regularly and on special occasions
- providing religious education for children and adults by preaching or teaching
- leading marriages, funerals and other special services
- offering counselling and welfare support to members of the congregation
- recruiting, training and coordinating the work of any local volunteers and lay preachers

You must consider the role of any individual sponsored worker under this route. For varying religions, the list above may have stronger elements of one area of pastoral work compared with another. A sponsored worker under this route may not be doing everything on the list above. Workers under this route may also be doing more than the duties listed above. You cannot penalise a worker or a sponsor for this but the role must not be mainly an administrative one, unless the worker is filling a senior post.

Missionaries

This route also includes missionaries or members of religious orders.

Missionary work can include:

- translating religious texts
- preaching and teaching
- filling a senior post within the organisation, for example, in charge of accounts, personnel management or information technology (IT)
- coordinating the work of missionaries

Missionary work cannot include:

- teaching in a faith run school
- general administrative or clerical work, unless the missionary is in a senior role

T2 Minister of Religion sponsor visits

During a visit, you must:

- check the roles of sponsored workers under this route
- check pay and conditions are at least equal to those of a settled worker in the same role, and comply with [National Minimum Wage regulations](#) where they apply
- make sure the organisation continues to have registered charity status or are otherwise excepted or exempt from such registration
- make sure the organisation is meeting their sponsor duties under this route
- ask questions about the roles of the type of workers the organisation is intending to sponsor, including how the sponsor supports and accommodates them

Resident labour market test (RLMT)

Prior to 1 December 2020, the role must normally have been advertised for 28 days in a national form of media appropriate to the organisation's religion, denomination, or in line with the requirements within the [sponsor guidance for employers](#) but there were [exceptions to the RLMT](#).

Where the sponsor holds national records on all qualified individuals and could show, using the records, no settled workers were available for the role in question, the RLMT was also met.

Exceptions to the RLMT

An RLMT was not required where the:

- role was supernumerary
- worker lives mainly within a religious order and is a member of that order

- the worker was extending their leave as a Tier 2 (Minister of Religion) to continue to work for the same sponsor in the same role

When identifying if a role was supernumerary, you must consider:

- how vital the role is to the sponsor's requirements, for example, could key religious services and rites continue without this role
- who would do the job if the worker was not employed, for example, if evidence suggests that the role would simply not exist, the role is likely to be supernumerary

When identifying whether a role involves living within and being a member of a religious order, you should consider:

- evidence supporting a clear lineage between the order and a larger bona fide religious group
- to what extent the group are 'set apart from society'
- the details of the 'specific religious devotion' they live in accordance with
- how much of their time is spent outside the group
- how much of their work is unconnected to their membership of the religious order

Related content

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[Religious Workers](#)

International Sportsperson

This page tells you what to consider when carrying out a sponsor visit for International Sportsperson.

This route is for elite sportspeople and coaches. They must be internationally established at the highest level and their employment must make a significant contribution to the development of their sport at the highest level in the UK.

Coaches also must be appropriately qualified.

Governing body endorsement

There are 2 kinds of sports governing body endorsements:

- one for the sponsoring club or team
- one for the sportsperson or coach

Endorsements are given by Home Office approved sport governing bodies. The approved sports governing bodies are included in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies of the Immigration Rules](#).

Sports players moving on loan

Loan arrangements are acceptable provided the governing body allows them and the player in question will return to the original sponsor at the end of the loan period. You must consider:

- whether the sponsor has notified the Home Office of any player on loan, using the sponsor management system (SMS)
- whether a player on loan is being effectively monitored, as the original sponsor is still responsible for the player
- whether the player has permanently transferred, if they have:
 - the sponsor must have informed the Home Office
 - the new club will need to have a licence and have assigned a new certificate of sponsorship (CoS)
- any player requiring leave who is on loan from an overseas club must be sponsored and must have a governing body endorsement, even if they are here temporarily

International Sportsperson sponsor visits

When visiting an International Sportsperson sponsor, you must:

- verify the sport governing body endorsement - the sponsor and each sponsored worker must have an endorsement from the appropriate governing body

- make sure the CoS was not assigned for longer than the validity of the governing body endorsement - if the sponsor has issued a CoS for longer than the period of endorsement, they have breached their sponsor duties

Related content

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Global Business Mobility routes

This page tells you what to consider when carrying out a sponsor visit for Global Business Mobility routes, two of which were previously Intra-Company routes.

These routes are for sponsors to bring workers to the UK on temporary assignments where those workers are working for a linked organisation outside the UK. There are five Global Business Mobility routes that cover the following types of assignment:

- Senior or Specialist Worker – for established employees transferring to the UK to do a senior or specialist role that could not be done by a local worker or new recruit.
- Graduate Trainee – for workers coming to the UK as part of a structured graduate training programme leading to a senior management or specialist position
- Secondment Worker – for workers seconded to the UK in relation to a high value contract between the sponsor and the worker's employer overseas
- Service Supplier – for either a contractual service supplier employed by an overseas service provider or a self-employed independent professional based overseas coming to the UK to provide services covered by one of the UK's international trade commitments
- UK Expansion Worker – for senior managers or specialist employees who are assigned to the UK to undertake work related to a business's expansion to the UK

Workers sponsored under the Global Business Mobility routes can normally only work in a skilled role listed in Appendix Skilled Occupations that is identified as eligible for the Global Business Mobility routes. Service Suppliers, however, can be sponsored in occupations not otherwise eligible for Global Business Mobility provided that the work is covered by one of the UK's trade agreements and they have the required qualifications and experience.

Workers sponsored under the Global Business Mobility routes must have worked outside the UK for the linked overseas business for a cumulative period of at least 12 months except where they are a:

- Senior or Specialist Worker or UK Expansion Worker in a job with a gross annual salary of £73,900 or more (based on working a maximum of 48 hours per week) and were working for the sponsor group on the date of their visa application
- Graduate Trainee and worked outside the UK for the sponsor group for a continuous period of at least 3 months immediately before the date of their visa application
- UK Expansion Worker if they are a Japanese national seeking to establish a UK branch or subsidiary of the sponsor group under the UK-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement or an Australian national, or permanent resident of Australia, seeking to establish a UK branch of the sponsor group under the Free Trade Agreement between the United Kingdom

of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Australia and were working for the sponsor group on the date of their visa application

- Secondment Worker and they:
 - applied for permission to stay (from within the UK)
 - had, or last had, permission as a Secondment Worker
 - applied to continue working for the same sponsor as in their last grant of permission (known as an 'extension of permission' application)

Senior or Specialist Workers and UK Expansion Workers must be paid at least £52,500 per year (previously £48,500 per year between 4 April 2024 and 21 July 2025, £45,800 per year between 12 April 2023 and 3 April 2024, £42,400 per year between 11 April 2022 and 12 April 2023 and £41,500 between 1 December 2020 and 11 April 2022) and at least the going rate for the job as stated in [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#) of the Immigration Rules. The only exception is where someone has extended their stay in the UK and:

- were previously granted permission as a Tier 2 (Intra-Company Transfer) Migrant under the rules in force before 6 April 2011, or as a Work Permit Holder under the rules in force before 27 November 2008
- since then have continuously had permission as a Senior or Specialist Worker

Such workers, however, must still be paid at least the going rate for the job as stated in [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#) of the Immigration Rules.

Graduate Trainees must be paid at least £27,300 per year (previously £25,410 per year between 4 April 2024 and 22 July 2025, £23,100 per year between 12 April 2023 and 3 April 2024 and £23,000 per year between 1 December 2020 and 12 April 2023) and either:

- 70% of the going rate for the job as stated in Tables 2 or 2b of [Appendix Skilled Occupations \(previously Tables 1 and 2 between 12 April 2022 and 3 April 2024 and Table 1 up to 11 April 2022\)](#)
- the going rate for the job as stated in Table 3 of [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#)

The salaries of Service Suppliers and Secondment Workers must comply with National Minimum Wage legislation.

Intra-Company routes

The Intra-Company routes were for workers of a multinational organisation, who were transferred to the UK to a linked organisation under one of the following:

- Intra-Company Transfer - for established employees who were transferred by their overseas employer to do a skilled job for a linked employer in the UK
- Intra-Company Graduate Trainee - for employees taking part in a structured graduate training programme who were being transferred by their overseas employer to a linked employer in the UK

Workers sponsored in the Intra-Company routes can only work in a job in a standard

occupation classification (SOC) code that is identified as eligible for these routes listed in [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#) of the Immigration Rules.

Workers sponsored under the previous Tier 2 (ICT) routes can only work in a skilled occupation at, or above, regulated qualifications framework (RQF) level 6 (or the equivalent in Scotland). There are, however, exceptions for existing employees. For details, see [skill level exemptions](#) under Skilled Worker.

Previous Intra-Company routes staff must have been working for the sponsor's organisation lawfully and continuously for at least 12 months before the transfer, unless they were absent for any of the following reasons:

- statutory maternity, paternity, parental or shared parental leave
- sick leave
- assisting in a national or international humanitarian or environmental crisis
- taking part in legally organised industrial action

From 6 April 2017 to 1 December 2020, workers earning £73,900 per year or more did not need to have a minimum of 12 months' experience of working for the sponsor.

If staff were previously granted leave in the UK under the rules before 6 April 2011, the sponsor must be paying them at least the appropriate rate stated in [Appendix Skilled Occupations of the Immigration Rules](#).

Global Business Mobility routes sponsor visits

During a Global Business Mobility sponsor visit, you must consider whether:

- sponsored workers have been employed by the organisation for the correct length of time before coming to the UK
- CoS have been assigned for the correct length of time for the route
- salaries are compliant with the rules for the route
- for Service Suppliers, they are, or were, appropriately qualified and experienced as outlined in Option A or Option B in [Appendix Global Mobility – Service Supplier](#)
- any graduate trainees are working towards a managerial or specialist role
- for previous Intra-Company Graduate Trainee routes, no more than 20 graduate trainees are transferred to the UK during any financial year

Related content

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Scale-up Workers

This page provides information about the Scale-up immigration route.

The Scale-up route allows employers who are in a sustained period of high growth to recruit people to work in the UK in highly skilled roles. The worker must have a high-skilled job offer from a qualifying Scale-up sponsor at the required salary level for a minimum period of 6 months.

There are 2 ways a sponsor can meet the definition of a 'qualifying Scale-up sponsor':

- the standard pathway (where we automatically assess employment growth and / or turnover growth, based on information submitted to HMRC)
- from 12 April 2023, the endorsing body pathway (where an approved endorsing body confirms the sponsor's eligibility to apply for a sponsor licence)

The standard pathway

Scale-up sponsors must have had:

- an annualised growth of at least 20% for the previous 3-year period based on either employment (their staff count) or their turnover
- a minimum of 10 employees at the start of the relevant 3-year period

The endorsing body pathway

The endorsing body pathway is for organisations who are unable to qualify under the standard pathway because their HMRC history is not long enough. To be eligible, sponsors must first obtain an endorsement from a [Home Office-approved endorsing body](#).

To qualify for an endorsement, sponsors must satisfy the approved endorsing body that they:

- have a minimum of 10 employees who pay income tax and national insurance through a PAYE scheme operated by them
- are registered for VAT
- are solvent and trading in the UK
- have an HMRC footprint of less than 4 years
- are able to demonstrate a potential growth rate consistent with the requirements of the Scale-up route and be reasonably expected to meet the Home Office definition of a qualifying Scale-up sponsor under the standard pathway within the next 4 years
- have sufficient finance to offer appropriate salaries to individuals working in roles that meet the skill level of this route
- have a UK-registered corporate bank account

In addition to the requirements above, sponsors must also have met at least three out of the following 5 criteria:

- Growth - sponsors must be able to show more than 20% growth in turnover or employment per year over a 2-year period
- Participation in a relevant Government programme or receipt of relevant Government funding – sponsors must have either:
 - participated in a recognised scale-up programme, such as Innovate UK EDGE or DCMS Creative Scale-up
 - received an Innovate UK loan or grant
 - participated in the Small Business Research Initiative
- Finance – sponsors must have raised a minimum of £1 million in equity finance in a single round in the 12 months immediately before the date of application to the endorsing body
- International – sponsors must have global offices or operations and be generating a minimum threshold of 10% of turnover from exports
- Research and development expenditure - sponsors expenditure on research, development or innovation must be either 10% of overall operating costs per year for 3 years or 15% in one of the last 3 years

The letter from the relevant endorsing body must contain a valid endorsement reference number, which must have been issued no more than 3 months before the date of the licence application.

Scale-up workers

Scale-up Workers must have the skills needed to enable the business to continue to grow. This means:

- the job must be at the required skill-level (graduate level or above)
- the worker must be paid at least £39,100 per year based on a maximum of a 48 hour week (£36,300 between 4 April 2024 and 22 July 2025, £34,600 between 3 April 2024 and 12 April 2023 and £33,000 and £10.10 per hour before 12 April 2023) and the 'going rate' for the occupation code as listed in [Appendix Skilled Occupations](#) of the Immigration Rules, whichever is the higher of these figures
- the worker must work for the sponsor for at least the first 6 months of their permission

After 6 months, the worker can continue to work for the sponsor without being sponsored or change employers providing they continue to meet the requirements of the Scale-up route.

Related content

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Temporary Worker

This page tells you what to consider when carrying out a sponsor visit for Temporary Worker routes.

[Creative Worker](#)

[Charity Worker](#)

[Religious Worker](#)

[Government Authorised Exchange](#)

[Seasonal Worker](#)

[International Agreement](#)

There are 7 routes:

- Creative Worker
- Charity Worker
- Religious Worker
- Government Authorised Exchange
- Seasonal Worker
- International Agreement
- Youth Mobility Scheme

This guidance does not include any specific details about the Youth Mobility Scheme, as they are not sponsored in the same way as workers in other Temporary Worker routes.

Creative Worker

Workers entering the UK under the Creative Worker route must be entertainers or creative artists coming for a maximum period of 12 months, with the option to extend their stay in the UK up to a maximum 24 months

During a visit to a sponsor using the Creative Worker route, you must make sure that they have met all the requirements of the relevant code of practice in [Appendix Creative Workers Codes of Practice of the Immigration Rules](#), where applicable. If there is no code of practice, sponsors must ensure that the role is otherwise eligible to be sponsored on the Creative Worker route because the worker will be making a unique contribution to creative life in the UK

Non-visa nationals

Non-visa nationals coming to the UK under this route can enter the UK without applying for entry clearance before they come if they are being sponsored for less than 3 months. They cannot extend their stay in country.

You must consider this when verifying the documents the sponsor has on record for the worker. You would not expect to see a visa issued overseas but should see a

valid leave stamp in the migrant's passport or, if they have entered from the Republic of Ireland, on a remote clearance form.

A list of countries whose nationals don't qualify as non-visa nationals can be found in [Appendix Visitor: Visa National of the Immigration Rules](#).

There are codes of practice categories in [Appendix Creative Workers Codes of Practice of the Immigration Rules](#) for:

- ballet
- dancers (in dance forms other than ballet)
- performers in theatre or opera
- performers in film and television
- workers in film and television
- models

You must be familiar with these codes of practice before going on a visit to a creative sector sponsor and sponsors must retain evidence that they have been followed.

If the role, such as a performer in the music industry, is not included in a code of practice, up to 15 May 2024, the sponsor must show they could not fill the role with a resident worker. This could be through:

- evidence of recruitment activity
- written support from an appropriate body, or sector labour market information
- evidence the migrant is internationally famous in their field
- evidence the migrant is part of a unit company
- evidence the migrant has a certain attribute or physical appearance
- evidence the migrant is required for continuity

This list is not exhaustive.

From 16 May 2024:

- the role must be in the creative industries and be listed in Appendix Skilled Occupations
- the worker must make a unique contribution to creative life in the UK

Examples of how a worker can make a unique contribution to creative life in the UK include where the worker is:

- a musician, performer or other artist with international status
- a member of a 'unit company' (as defined in Appendix Creative Workers Codes of Practice)

Alternatively, sponsors can apply the principles set out in Appendix Creative Worker Codes of Practice to sectors for which there is no code of practice. They must also retain evidence to show the worker will be making a unique contribution to creative life in the UK. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- evidence the worker has international status in their field (such as press cuttings, publicity material, programmes or evidence of awards or television or radio interviews) – this is different to being well known only in one country
- evidence the worker has a certain attribute or appearance that is unlikely to be available in the UK – for example, a certain physical appearance or talent, or a linguistic or vocal skill
- evidence the worker is needed for continuity – this means the individual has worked for a period of one month or more during the past year on the same production outside the UK before the production came to the UK; the ‘same production’ is one that is largely the same in terms of direction and design as the production outside the UK
- evidence the worker is part of a unit company which exists in another country outside the UK and has performed at least once in that country – examples of unit companies include: theatre, opera or dance companies; orchestras and other musical groups; circus troupes or acts, such as a troupe of acrobats

The period covered on a certificate of sponsorship (CoS) for a creative sector worker can include any rehearsal periods required. The sponsor may also assign a group certificate of sponsorship for several artists that form part of the same group, paying just one fee. The sponsor will still need to assign an individual CoS for each worker, and must either:

- indicate the worker’s share of the group fee
- enter £0.01 where the share of the group fee is not known

If the worker has several engagements

The worker can have one or more sponsors covering a period of engagements.

For example:

- one sponsor can be responsible for the worker for the period of their stay in the UK for each venue or engagement (with just one CoS being issued)
- the worker can have several sponsors over the period of their stay where, each sponsor assigns a CoS for the relevant period, but the dates on these CoS must not overlap

There must not be more than 14 days between each engagement during any period of sponsorship. If there is, the worker must leave the UK and return for the following engagements. From 6 April 2021, time spent outside the UK by the worker doesn’t count towards the 14 days.

During a visit, you must check if the sponsor has assigned a CoS for a worker with a gap of more than 14 days between engagements. If so, they will be in breach of their sponsor duties and you should record this in the visit report.

Groups

It is common for workers in the creative sector to be part of a group. If you ask to see records of such a migrant, you should also know the group they are part of, as sponsors often file their records under the group's name rather than the migrant.

Creative and Sporting

This route was for [creative workers](#) as above and sports people (and their entourage where appropriate) and coaches:

- who are internationally established at the highest level in their sport
- whose employment will make a significant contribution to the development of the sport in the UK

Sports people must have met the following rules before 11 October 2021:

- the sponsor must have a governing body endorsement from the appropriate Home Office-approved sports governing body
- the sponsor cannot be an agent
- the worker must have a personal endorsement from the appropriate Home Office-approved sports governing body before being assigned a CoS

Approved sports governing bodies are in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies of the Immigration Rules](#).

See also: [International Sportsperson](#).

Permitted paid engagements

On 6 April 2012, a visitor route was created which allows workers in the creative and sporting sectors to come to the UK for less than one month to undertake certain permitted paid engagements, see Visitors undertaking permitted paid engagements.

You must remember that visitor routes are not subject to the rules of sponsorship. You must not mark a sponsor as not complying with their sponsor duties when considering the sponsor's dealings with a visitor.

If you encounter a visitor in breach of their conditions on a compliance visit, you must refer this to intelligence using the online referral form. If this involves illegal working, you must also make a Civil Penalties Compliance team referral.

Charity Worker

During a sponsor visit you must check that charity workers:

- are not being paid for the work they are doing, it must only be voluntary, but they can be paid reasonable, permitted expenses

- only do fieldwork that is directly related to the purpose of the sponsoring organisation (see below)

For more information on permitted expenses, see section 44 of the [National Minimum Wage Act 1998](#).

Fieldwork

This is defined as activities which would not normally be offered at a waged or salaried rate and which contribute directly to the achievement or advancement of the sponsor's charitable purpose. It does not include work ancillary to the sponsor's charitable purpose including, for example, routine back office administrative roles, retail or other sales roles, fund-raising roles and roles involved in the maintenance of the sponsor's offices and other assets.

Interviewing

It is particularly important that when you interview the sponsor and any sponsored workers under this route you check:

- any payments made to sponsored charity workers
- any duties that such workers have

Religious Worker

The workers coming into the UK as Temporary Worker - Religious Workers can be:

- religious workers where duties may include preaching, pastoral and non-pastoral work
- visiting religious workers employed in the same role overseas, although the exact details of their duties in the UK may differ, the employment should be ongoing and time spent in the UK consistent with a break from their main employment overseas
- a member of a religious order such as an order of monks or nuns, or a similar religious community involving a permanent commitment

Religious workers with a CoS assigned on or after 10 January 2019, can no longer fill the role of a minister of religion. A minister of religion is someone who is a religious functionary whose main regular duties comprise the leading of a congregation in performing the rites and rituals of the faith and in preaching the essentials of the creed.

You must be familiar with the types of genuine religious institutions listed in the [sponsorship guidance for employers and educators](#) that qualify for a licence under this route.

The sponsor must support the worker, for example, by providing funds and/ or accommodation to help maintain them while they are in the UK.

The worker will have been given a maximum of 24 months leave.

During a sponsor visit, you must consider the conditions relating to the worker, their role and the resident labour market consideration for this route, which are identical to [T2 Minister of Religion](#).

Government Authorised Exchange

The Temporary Worker - Government Authorised Exchange (GAE) route is for workers coming into the UK through an approved scheme, where the sponsor is an overarching body that has the support of a UK government department or one of its executive agencies.

The exceptions are that a sponsor can be a:

- Higher Education Institution (HEI) that is recruiting:
 - a sponsored researcher
 - a visiting academic who will give lectures, act as an examiner or work on a supernumerary research collaboration
- UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and organisations endorsed in UKRI's Science, Research and Academia scheme or UKRI's Future Technology Research and Innovation scheme
- Government department or a government department executive agency
- diplomatic mission or consular post that has a Memorandum of Understanding in place with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to sponsor interns under the Diplomatic Missions Interns Scheme

The worker:

- can only come into the UK for up to the maximum length of time permitted under the scheme
- cannot be filling a job vacancy or providing unskilled labour

During a visit, consider whether the work they do is:

- over and above the normal staffing requirements of the host organisation - the worker must not be filling a UK vacancy, even on a temporary basis
- listed in Tables 1, 1a, 2, 2aa, 3 or 3a of Appendix Skilled Occupations ([previously](#) Table 1, 2 or 3 between 4 April 2024 and 21 July 2025 [Tables 1 and 2 between 12 April 2022 and 3 April 2024](#), [Table 1 between 1 December 2020 and 11 April 2022](#) and at minimum RQF level 3 or above on the regulated qualification framework (or its Scottish equivalent) up to 30 November unless they were in the UK as part of a European Union Lifelong Learning Programme)

If not, you should record this in the visit report.

Categories of approved government authorised exchange schemes

All GAE schemes fall under one of 4 categories:

- work experience programmes (workers can participate for a maximum of 12 months)
- research programmes (workers can participate for a maximum of 24 months)
- training programmes (workers can participate for a maximum of 24 months)
- overseas government language programmes – these schemes are professional language training programmes that are fully or partially paid for by an overseas government or an organisation affiliated to an overseas government for up to 24 months

Permitted paid engagements

On 6 April 2012, a visitor route was created which allows visiting academics to come to the UK for less than one month to undertake certain permitted paid engagements.

You must remember that visitor routes are not subject to the rules on sponsorship. You must not mark a sponsor as not complying with their sponsor duties when considering the sponsor's dealings with a visitor.

Seasonal Workers

This route is for workers coming to the UK as seasonal workers in the horticulture sector through an approved scheme operator, not a direct employer.

Between 11 October 2021 and December 31 2021, poultry work was also permitted as was haulage driving work involving transportation of food goods from the same date until 28 February 2022. Temporary visas were also made available for workers undertaking specified pork butchery work.

From 2022, poultry work was permitted for up to 2000 workers for specified sponsors between 3 October and 31 December.

The 'horticulture sector' means those growing:

- protected vegetables – those grown in glasshouse systems
- field vegetables – those grown outdoors, including vegetables, herbs, leafy salads and potatoes
- soft fruit – those grown outdoors or under cover (for example, in glasshouses or a polytunnel), such as strawberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, blueberries and all ribes and rubus species
- top fruit (orchard fruit) – trees that bear fruit, such as apples, plums, cherries, and apricots
- vine and bines – both twining or climbing flexible stems of certain plants – for example, hops is a bine, and grapes is a vine

- mushrooms – typically covers *Agaricus bisporus* species but can also include more exotic species; typically grown indoors
- bulbs and cut flowers, such as daffodils, grown outdoors and indoors
- pot plants, such as seasonal bedding plants like pansies, violas, germaniums and poinsettias
- hardy ornamental nursery stock such as Christmas trees, shrubs, roses, ornamental trees and perennials
- tree and forest nurseries

Work in the poultry production sector means in one of the following roles:

- Butcher (occupation code 5431)
- Bird / game dresser (occupation code 5433)
- Killer and plucker (occupation code 5433)
- Plucker (occupation code 5433)
- Poulterer (occupation code 5433)
- Poultry processor (occupation code 5433)
- Poultry sticker (occupation code 5433)
- Trusser (occupation code 5433)
- Food operative (occupation code 8111)
- Poultry catcher/handler (occupation code 9111)
- Poultry vaccinator (occupation code 9119)
- Poultry meat packer (occupation code 9132 or 9134 before 4 April 2024)

Haulage driving involving transportation of food goods means:

- large goods vehicle drivers (occupation code 8211)
- the work involves the transportation of food goods

‘Specified pork butchery work’ means a butcher (occupation code 5431) involved in slaughtering and butchering pigs or preparing and processing pig meat. For the role to be eligible under this route, the work must take place at a slaughterhouse, a processing site, or a farm.

‘Seasonal work’ means employment which fluctuates or is restricted according to the season or time of the year.

Sponsors must be:

- endorsed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to be an approved scheme operator
- licensed by the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority

Individual employers and organisations are not allowed to sponsor workers under this route, even if they are licensed as a sponsor under other routes within the points-based system.

Any work or activity carried out by workers on a Temporary Worker Seasonal Workers scheme must be in a seasonal role with an employer in the horticultural or poultry production sectors assigned by an approved scheme operator.

This pilot is subject to an annual quota, set by the Home Office, and divided between the scheme operators. For 2019, the quota was 2,500; for 2020, it was 10,000 and for 2021, it was 30,000. Temporary quotas of 800 for certain types of butchery workers, 5,500 for poultry workers and 5,000 for haulage drivers were also set. In 2022, the quota was 40,000, 2,000 of which were reserved for poultry workers. For 2023, the quota was 47,000, 2,000 of which were reserved for poultry workers. The same quota was agreed for 2024. For 2025, the quota was 45,000, 20,00 of which were reserved for poultry. For 2026, the quota was 42,900, 1,900 of which were reserved for poultry.

Sponsors must undertake robust and comprehensive monitoring of all the workers they sponsor in their workplace, including ensuring that:

- the workers' work environment is safe and complies with relevant Health and Safety requirements
- employers take adequate steps to ensure workers understand Health and Safety procedures, including providing translations into the workers' first language if required
- workers are treated fairly by their employer, including not penalising workers for failing to work at the fair piece rate
- workers are given an employment contract in their first language, as well as in English – these must not be zero-hours contracts
- workers are paid properly – this includes satisfying National Living Wage, National Minimum Wage regulations, including those on fair rates for piece work, and Holiday Pay
- workers are allowed time off and proper breaks
- workers are made fully aware of procedures if they are sick or injured, including how to make a claim on any medical insurance they may have
- workers are provided with appropriate equipment to do their job safely and are not charged for it, including any replacements of worn and accidentally damaged items
- employers do not impose additional, unnecessary charges on workers, whether directly or indirectly
- workers are housed in hygienic and safe accommodation that is in a good state of repair
- workers are not transported in unsafe vehicles
- workers are not threatened with, or subjected to, violence
- workers are not subject to any discrimination
- workers' passports, travel documents or any other identity documents are not withheld from them
- procedures are in place to enable workers to report any concerns
- workers are made fully aware of the expectations on the sponsor and the employer, and how to report any concerns where those expectations are not met

If the applicant is sponsored to work in the horticulture sector, they should be paid at least £12.71 (£12.21 between April 9 2025 and April 8 2026, £11.44 between 4 April 2024 and 8 April 2025, £10.42 between 12 April 2023 and 3 April 2024 or £10.10 before 12 April 2023) for each hour worked and receive at least 32 hours of paid employment each week (30 hours before 12 April 2023).

If the applicant is sponsored under occupation code 5431 or 5433 in the poultry production sector, they should be paid at least £38,700 pro rata each year (£26,200 between 12 April 2023 and 3 April 2024 or £25,600 before 12 April 2023), at least £15.88 for each hour worked (£10.42 between 12 April 2023 and 3 April 2024 or £10.10 before 12 April 2023).

If the applicant is sponsored to work in any other eligible role in the poultry production sector, they should be paid at least £12.71 for each hour worked (£12.21 between April 9 2025 and April 8 2026, £11.44 between 4 April 2024 and 8 April 2025, £10.42 between 12 April 2023 and 3 April 2024 or £10.10 before 12 April 2023) and receive at least 32 hours of paid employment each week (30 hours before 12 April 2023).

Sponsors must not place any additional charges on participating workers, beyond the costs of administrating the scheme.

They cannot use the Temporary Worker - Seasonal Workers route to source their own labour needs.

Workers taking part in a Temporary Worker - Seasonal Workers scheme must:

- be at least 18 years old
- not establish a business in the UK
- only take employment in a seasonal job permitted by this scheme, and with an employer in an approved sector that has been assigned by the sponsor
- will comply with the conditions of their entry clearance and will leave the UK when it expires

Sponsors must not assign a CoS than for longer than they need the worker or beyond the maximum period permitted by the scheme (6 months in any 12 month period for horticultural workers and only between 2 October and 31 December for poultry workers).

You must check if, within any 12-month period, any of the following occur:

- fewer than 95 percent of the sponsored workers were granted entry clearance
- 3 percent or more of the sponsored workers who obtain entry clearance fail to arrive at their place of employment
- fewer than 97 percent of the sponsored workers who obtain entry clearance return overseas at the end of their permitted stay

You may also be asked to visit places where Seasonal Workers are employed during which you will interview both the employer and a number of sponsored workers.

International Agreement

The Temporary Worker - International Agreement route is for workers who are coming to the UK under contract to provide a service that is covered under international law, which includes:

- employees of overseas governments and international organisations
- private servants in diplomatic households or households of employees of international organisations

Before December 2020, this route also used to include:

- the general agreement on trade in services (GATS)
- similar agreements between the UK or EU and another country or countries

Before going on a visit under this route, you must familiarise yourself with the relevant sections of the [sponsorship: guidance for employers and educators](#).

You must remember visits to organisations under this route may be politically and/ or culturally sensitive. If you wish to take action against a sponsor in this route, you must get authorisation at a minimum of senior executive officer (SEO) level, who must countersign the visit report.

Private servants in diplomatic households or households of employees of international organisations

The worker must:

- have a contract of employment with the named diplomat or employee of an international organisation
- not take up any employment with the employer other than for which the CoS was assigned
- comply with the conditions of their permission to stay and leave the UK when it expires
- be paid at least the [National Minimum Wage](#)
- be employed as a private servant in the household of:
 - a named member of staff of a diplomatic or consular mission who has diplomatic privileges and immunity as defined by the Vienna conventions on diplomatic or consular relations
 - a named official employed by an international organisation who enjoys certain privileges and immunities under UK or international law
- not be related to the employer or their spouse, either by blood or by marriage

You must consider these conditions when carrying out a visit to a sponsor under this route. It is also important to note that you must be aware of your responsibilities in the prevention of human trafficking if interviewing workers and their employers in this route.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Visitor routes

This page tells you what to consider when finding migrant visitors on a sponsor visit.

Employment

Visitors of any route do not have the right to work while in the UK unless they are doing [permitted activities](#). If you find a visitor undertaking employment which is not permitted while on a sponsor visit, you must report this.

For more information on visitor categories, see: '[Tourist and short-term visas](#)'.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Proving your identity

This page explains the requirement to be able to prove your identity to sponsors and migrants.

Identification cards

When visiting sponsors, it is important you have an identification card to prove who you are. The Home Office issues identity cards to non-warranted officers who need to prove their identity to the general public. It is your responsibility to also make sure your identity card is in date as the team issuing the card will not remind you when it is due to expire.

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

As you are not a warranted officer, you cannot force entry to a sponsor's premises. The sponsor guidance makes clear that:

- as part of their sponsor duties, the sponsor agrees to cooperate with the Home Office
- compliance officers may prearrange a visit or carry out an unannounced visit

It is perfectly reasonable for a sponsor to ask you to prove your identity.

Extra verification

With or without an identification card, a sponsor or prospective sponsor may still insist on another means to verify your identity. Sponsors can call the Home Office on 0300 123 4699 to verify your identity.

Uniforms

You must wear a uniform when carrying out a visit if one has been provided. This is one way of proving your identity. You must have your line manager's permission and a valid reason for not wearing a uniform on a visit, unless the risk assessment advises you not to. These will be looked by your line manager on a case-by-case basis.

Compliance officers are exempt from wearing uniform when carrying our visits in Northern Ireland. .

Related content

[Contents](#)

Counter terrorism referral process

This page tells you how to refer a case of potential counter terrorism (CT) interest to the police, where immediate action is required.

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

Related content

[Contents](#)

Interviewing the sponsor

This page explains the procedures and considerations needed when interviewing a sponsor on a sponsor visit.

You must use the current sponsor interview record in the interview:

- Work and Temporary sponsor interview record

Starting the interview

You must start by making sure that:

- the interviewee understands you
- they are fit and well to be interviewed
- the location of the interview has been carefully considered to protect the privacy of the interviewee
- confirm their identity and the role they have in the sponsoring organisation
- confirm, if they are not the AO, they have all necessary authority to act for the sponsor

If a sponsor asks for their representative to be present, you must make clear that they should not intervene during the interview, or the rest of the visit for that matter. If they have any comments, they can make them at the end of the interview or visit.

If, however, a representative is a key contact or level 1 user, they can act for the sponsor during the visit.

If, during the interview, the sponsor tells you they wish to surrender their licence, you must follow the guidance on [sponsors who want to surrender their licence](#).

Breaks

You must make sure that interviewees are offered refreshment breaks of at least 15 minutes every 2 hours, including meal breaks where appropriate. The start and end time of breaks should be recorded on the interview record. If the interviewee has refused a break and stated they wish to continue, this should also be noted.

Refusal to co-operate

The sponsor guidance makes clear that:

- the sponsor must co-operate with the Home Office
- visits will happen and that they may be prearranged or unannounced

If, during the visit, the sponsor appears not to be cooperating, you must politely remind the sponsor that when they signed their sponsor application they agreed to co-operate.

If the sponsor refuses to cooperate in the interview, you must:

- note any signs of non-co-operation in the visit report
- not make any judgemental remarks about the sponsor
- back up your comments with evidence as to why you considered the sponsor was not co-operating

Language considerations

Sponsors in Wales must be given the:

- opportunity to speak in Welsh if they so wish, and you must not force them to speak in English
- option to speak in Welsh through an interpreter if you do not speak Welsh

Where an authorising officer or key contact cannot speak English or Welsh, the interview may be carried out through the use of an interpreter. See '[use of interpreters and translators](#)' section for more details.

On return to the office, you must carry out a systems check on Atlas to identify if the person has gained citizenship or some other form of indefinite leave which requires an example of English language ability. If this is the case, you must send to the intelligence team through the IMS referral process as possible abuse.

The interview

Topic-based interview prompts have been produced. The following guide you on the areas you should be investigating:

- Worker and temporary Worker interview topic prompts

Investigative interviewing involves exploring topic areas rather than simply asking a series of questions. You are expected to use active listening skills to decide the direction the interview should take. Each area on the prompt relates to a potential breach of the sponsor's duties, but:

- the prompts do not contain an exhaustive list of relevant topics:
 - you may wish to ask other questions related to immigration practice that is outside the scope of sponsorship or work permit compliance - if you are asking these questions, you must be sure you have the subject knowledge to ask them
- you must not ask questions about any non-immigration related subject
- when you ask questions about sponsorship, you must only be asking questions which are relevant to compliance with the sponsor guidance

You must use the current standard interview record form to record:

- your name

- the name of the interviewee
- the time, date and location of the interview
- what was said at interview

You must not use your own version of an interview record form. Additional pages of interview notes must be recorded on the interview continuation sheets. The sponsor name must be written at the top along with the page number.

Once you have completed the interview record form, you must ask the sponsor to sign it to confirm that it is an accurate record of the interview. The sponsor must sign each side of every continuation sheet that contains interview notes.

If the sponsor refuses to sign the form, you must record this as evidence of non-compliance. You must note any reasons that the sponsor gives for refusing to sign.

Key personnel

On a visit, you may not get to speak to the authorising officer or key contact. You must not terminate the interview unless the sponsor tells you they:

- are not the appropriate person to talk to
- would prefer you to come back another time

It may be that by continuing the interview, you can gather enough evidence to make a re-visit unnecessary, but if not, Sponsor Operations may ask you to re-visit at a later date.

The sponsor wishes to surrender their licence

If, during the visit, the sponsor tells you they wish to surrender their licence, you must:

- tell them there are implications for doing this which means:
 - they will not be able to sponsor new workers
 - where applicable, this will affect the leave of existing workers
- ask the sponsor to log on to the sponsor management system to fill in the 'surrender declaration', print it off and sign it
- if the authorising officer has left the organisation, request a signed covering letter to verify the surrender – this will give casework colleagues the authorisation to act on the surrender request

At the earliest opportunity on returning to the office, you must send the surrender declaration form and where applicable, a covering letter, to:

Sponsor Casework Operations
UK Visa and Immigration
L4 Vulcan House Steel
Millsands
Sheffield

S3 8NS

Related content

[Contents](#)

Worker interviews

This page tells you how to carry out a worker interview on a sponsor visit.

The purpose of the worker interview is to assess whether the worker is working and being paid in line with the conditions attached to their leave.

You must start by verifying that:

- the worker is fit, well and content to be interviewed
- the worker can understand you
- the worker can show you identification to prove their identity
- the worker is subject to immigration control
- the location of the interview has been carefully considered to protect the privacy of the interviewee

If a worker wants a representative to be present, you may refuse to allow that. If they or the representative insist, you can refuse to carry on with the interview and note the lack of cooperation in your report.

Sponsored workers must be interviewed either in English or Welsh. If a language barrier exists that makes this impossible, the inability to carry out an interview in an official language should be clearly noted on the visit report. The interview should not continue in a language other than English or Welsh whether through the officer's ability to speak the language or through any local translation.

Workers not subject to sponsorship

There may be occasions where the worker you are interviewing has:

- now moved into a different immigration route
- indefinite leave to remain or citizenship
- acquired a right of abode under the EEA Regulations

If they are not subject to sponsorship, you must not continue the interview unless either:

- the individual wishes to speak to you, such as, they wish to make an allegation
- you think continuing the interview may be of benefit to any investigation

If you do continue with the interview, you must explain to the worker that they:

- are under no obligation to speak to you
- can stop the interview at any time

Only where the worker has poor or non-existent English language skills and you suspect potential illegal working or criminal activity may you use official interpretation

services to interview them. See [interpretation and translation](#) section for more details.

The interview

If, during the interview, the worker does not appear to understand your question, you must re-phrase it in a way they do understand. You must give them every opportunity to explain their answers and this is even more important if their answer appears to contradict that given by the sponsor or if the answer indicates any breach of the conditions of their leave.

Breaks

You must make sure that interviewees are offered refreshment breaks of at least 15 minutes every 2 hours, including meal breaks where appropriate. The start and end time of breaks should be recorded on the interview record. If the interviewee has refused a break and stated they wish to continue, this should also be noted.

The interview record

Updated worker interview records have been devised to maximise flexibility of questioning, and better support investigative interviewing techniques. The following are the only records you may use to record migrant interviews:

- Work and Temporary Work migrant interview record

Topic-based interview prompts have been produced. The following guide you on the areas you should investigate:

- Worker and temporary Worker interview topic prompts

Investigative interviewing involves exploring topic areas rather than simply asking a series of questions. You must use active listening skills to decide the direction the interview should take.

You must ask the worker to sign the interview record form. This form is used as evidence in a revocation or curtailment case, so you need to make sure you have followed the correct procedure. You must use the current standard interview record form. You must not use your own version of an interview record form. Additional pages of interview notes must be recorded on the interview continuation sheets.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Interpretation and translation

This page explains the rules about translation and interpretation during or after a sponsor visit.

Use of interpreters and translators

You must carry out interviews with sponsors or workers in English or in Welsh. It is crucial you verify the sponsor or worker understands you and they are able to carry out the interview in English or Welsh. If they are unable to do so, you must note this on the visit report. You must only use an official interpreter to:

- interview a worker where potential illegal working or criminal activity is suspected, and an interview is needed for evidence
- interview a sponsor who is unable to speak English or Welsh
- interview a sponsor who wishes to speak in Welsh

During the visit, you must keep to the following guidelines:

- never allow someone encountered during the visit to interpret for you, as you cannot guarantee they are interpreting correctly
- you must not use your own language skills to interpret in another language unless:
 - you have registered those skills with the Home Office
 - are accredited to do so
- if you are able to speak fluently with a sponsor in Welsh, you are exempt from registering your language skills

If you fail to follow this guidance, any evidence you have gathered during the visit may be invalid if the interviewee, at a later date, challenges the interpretation skills.

Interpretation: Big Word

The Sponsor Compliance Network use Big Word for interpretation, an on-call language service. An accredited interpreter does the interpretation, by telephone.

To use this service, you must:

1. Call 0800 321 3026 to access Big Word.
2. Enter your access code:
 - if you do not know your access code, contact your line manager or duty office
3. Enter the language code or enter 0 if you do not know the language code:
 - for a list of the top 30 languages, see the Big Word country access codes list
4. Explain to the interpreter the purpose of the call.
5. Carry out the interview.
6. Make sure you record the interpreter's identification number on the interview record sheet.

Documents

All documents the sponsor keeps in relation to their sponsor duties must be in English or Welsh. If you request to see any documents and they are not in English or Welsh, the sponsor must supply a certified translation.

You must not request to see documents if it does not form part of the sponsor duties within the sponsor guidance. Requesting documents without a valid reason, particularly after a visit, that need translating may result in the sponsor attempting to make a claim against the Home Office if it is not seen as relevant.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Interview notes

This page explains the procedures concerning interview notes.

When carrying out an interview with a sponsor, a potential sponsor or a worker, you must make interview notes. Interview notes must be legible and on the correct template, as these may be called into evidence as part of legal proceedings. You must use the current standard interview record form.

For Secure English Language Test and Life in the UK test centre visits, you must use the personalised audit records

The following procedures must be covered during the visit:

- ask the sponsor, potential sponsor or worker if they are fit and well to be interviewed
- ask if they are happy to carry out the interview in English or Welsh and if they understand what you are saying to them
- read out the statements, or allow the sponsor or worker to read if they are able to from the interview record form and ask them to sign to say they agree to continue with the interview
- explain the purpose of the interview
- confirm the arrangements for breaks, for example, a break of at least 15 minutes will be taken every 2 hours
- record the start and finish time of the interview and note the time of any breaks
- ask the interviewee to sign the interview record form after the interview
- give them a copy of the interview records if they ask for one, either:
 - immediately if they have photocopying facilities
 - send a PDF copy via email after the visit, unless you can scan using your OneDrive app on your Home Office phone during the visit and email whilst still on site

You must not destroy the interview records under any circumstances. They are important pieces of information, which you may need to use as evidence at a later stage.

You must not use your own version of an interview record form.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Sponsors' documents

This page explains the procedure for retaining documents from a sponsor visit.

Checking documents

During a visit, you will come across various kinds of documents. For the purpose of the visit, you are only required to examine documents that a sponsor or a potential sponsor is required to possess under its sponsorship duties. You should not normally keep copies of the documents as you will:

- verify most documents
- certify you have seen them (where necessary) in the visit report

[Keeping records for sponsorship \(appendix D\)](#) of the sponsor guidance gives a comprehensive list of the types of documents you may need to verify.

Keeping documents

There may be occasions during a sponsor visit when you may decide it is necessary to keep documents, for example, if:

- the sponsor is significantly failing in their sponsor duties and copies of documents will support your visit report
- the amount of information in the documents is vast and you need to examine it further back at the office
- you may have found an illegal worker and documentary evidence will benefit the Home Office in its ability to maintain immigration control
- there is evidence of a crime being committed and the documents will prove useful to:
 - partners within the Home Office
 - another government department
 - law enforcement officers
- Sponsor Operations or another unit has asked you to keep copies of documents

Where possible, undertake scanning using the OneDrive app in your phone, however, if this is not available at the time, you must transport documents securely.

Original documents

You must avoid keeping original documents where possible. If sponsor operations require original documents, they will contact the sponsor directly at the case working stage.

Sponsor compliance

The sponsor must provide you with any documents you request which are relevant to the running of the organisation. If the sponsor refuses to show you a particular document or allow you to take any documents away from the premises, you must consider the circumstances and decide whether the sponsor either:

- is non-compliant and refuses to cooperate
- has valid reasons or concerns and you agree the refusal is reasonable

For either of the reasons above, you must reflect this in the visit report.

Timescales for producing documents

The documents specified in [Keeping records for sponsorship \(appendix D\)](#) of the [sponsor guidance for employers](#) must be made available to the compliance officer, but the guidance does not specify that this must be at the time of the visit.

You may mark a sponsor as 'not met' in the visit report if they tell you they do not have the documents.

If the sponsor tells you they have the documents requested but they are not immediately available, you must allow reasonable timescales for the documents to be produced. The timescales you allow will depend on the situation and is at your discretion.

In most cases, 48 hours from the date of the visit, as the sponsor should have reasonable access to them.

If the visit has been announced and the sponsor was told that the documents would be required during the visit, in exceptional circumstances, you may allow the sponsor up to 24 hours from the date of the visit to provide the requested documents.

If the issue is that key personnel are not present, then you must agree a time with the organisation when they will be able to provide the documents. This will usually be within 48 hours of the visit.

In these cases, for clarity, transparency and agreement, you must request the:

- documents and / or evidence required
- timescales agreed to send the documentation
- method for sending the documents

If key personnel are present but tell you the documents are kept at another location, first request whether it is possible for the sponsor or someone in their organisation to retrieve the documents. Only if this is not possible, you must inform them that they have 48 hours from the date of the visit to provide them.

Special circumstances

There may be occasions where the sponsor is unable to send in the documents within the timescales agreed on the 'Further Documentation / Information Request' form. This may be because of:

- death
- serious illness
- being stranded overseas
- regulatory inspection
- regulatory seizure of documents
- flood or fire damage

This list is not exhaustive. If you have a situation where it may be deemed reasonable that the sponsor has not been able to provide the documents or information within the agreed timescales, you must request evidence to be provided and refer this to your line manager.

Data Protection Act 2018

As a compliance officer, you are covered by [section 4 of Schedule 2 of the Data Protection Act 2018](#). This allows you to take away an individual's personal information to maintain effective immigration control or to investigate or detect activities that might undermine that. You do not need to inform the individual you have their information.

You can share this information with:

- other interested units within the Home Office
- other government departments
- local authorities
- the police

The [Immigration Exemption Policy Document](#) contains more information.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Checks on record-keeping and reporting systems

This page tells you about the procedures and considerations involved in assessing a sponsor's record-keeping and reporting systems.

Sponsor document storage

You must take into account that sponsors can keep documents in either an electronic or paper version. They do not have to store documents in any particular format or in any particular way. It is up to the sponsor how they store the documents but they must allow you to look at them if you ask.

Length of time to store documents

A sponsor must keep documents, unless otherwise stated in [Keeping records for sponsorship \(appendix D\)](#) of the sponsor guidance, for whichever is the shorter of:

- one year from the date sponsorship of the worker ended
- the date on which you examine and approve them, if the worker is no longer sponsored by that sponsor

A sponsor may need to keep documents for longer to satisfy the requirements of other legislation. This is irrelevant to your assessment and you must only assess the sponsor on the above requirements.

Documents sent with a sponsor licensing application

A sponsor is required to keep these documents for the length of their licence. It would be unusual for you to need to see these but Sponsor Operations may ask you to verify a document the sponsor sent as part of their licensing application. If they have made a request, you will find it recorded on the visit referral form.

Approach to assessing human resource (HR) systems

When you assess HR systems, you must consider whether you are carrying out a pre-licence or post-licence compliance visit.

When on a pre-licence assessment visit, you are assessing:

- if there are HR systems in place or in readiness
- if the systems are likely to meet all the Home Office requirements if the sponsor licence is approved
- any additional evidence that may suggest the sponsor will, or will not, be able to fulfil their sponsor duties

When on a post-licence compliance visit, you are assessing:

- all of the points listed above for a [pre-licensing visit](#)
- that acceptable systems are actually being applied for any sponsored workers

Worker and Temporary Worker sponsor guidance

The guidance in these pages on checking a sponsor's HR systems relate directly to paragraphs within the sponsor guidance. You must read the appropriate sections of the [Worker and Temporary Worker guidance for employers](#).

Related content

[Contents](#)

Checks on immigration status monitoring

This page tells you what to assess when examining the systems in place for monitoring a worker's immigration status when carrying out a sponsor visit.

You must check the sponsor:

- has a system for monitoring a worker's immigration status, so that it can stop sponsoring any who no longer has permission to work in the UK
- carries out right to work checks on all who carry out work on their behalf, including checking e-visas where applicable
- keeps copies of workers':
 - passports, including any page showing leave stamps where applicable
 - immigration status documents including their period of permission to stay in the UK where applicable
 - UK biometric residence permits where applicable
- has proof, such as a copy of an asylum registration card, that each worker can legally work for them

If a sponsor does not take copies of passports or immigration documents

If a sponsor does not take copies of passports or immigration documents for sponsored workers, where applicable, and undertake right to work checks for all workers, they automatically fail the record keeping and maintaining documents section of the visit report because they have failed the requirement of:

- immigration status monitoring
- maintaining documents

Such checks for non-sponsored staff are not mandatory and a sponsor is not in breach of their sponsor duties if they do not make these checks. If, however, the sponsor was found to be employing an illegal worker, the sponsor would not be classed by the Home Office as having a 'statutory excuse'. For further information [see the section on migrant issues and illegal working](#).

Monitoring expiry dates

You must be satisfied the sponsor is able to comply with the sponsor duty to stop employing workers who no longer have the right to work.

How the sponsor makes sure they can comply is their decision, but they must be able to show an effective way of doing so. You may test the effectiveness of a system in place by questioning the sponsor about how they know when a particular worker's leave is due to expire. Some examples are listed below, although this list is not exhaustive. They may:

- record the expiry date in an Outlook calendar
- record the expiry date in a diary
- have an excel spreadsheet or database with a list of dates
- have only a few staff and keep the date on an individual or group in a human resources file
- keep copies of visas, immigration stamps and/or a copy of the online right to work check as a record of the expiry date

You must mark the sponsor as 'Not Met' in 'Area 1: Monitoring Immigration Status' on the visit report if they answer:

- 'because they will tell me'
- 'I don't know'
- 'I didn't know I had to know'
- any similar answer

You must not mark the sponsor as 'Not Met' because, for example, they:

- do not have a system for alerting them 1, 2, or 3 months before the expiry date is due
- do not have a written procedure for how monitoring the expiry dates works
- only hold an electronic format and not a paper format
- only hold a paper format and not an electronic format
- have no workers, so they can't monitor expiry dates

If you use any of the reasons above to mark down the sponsor, or use any other reasons that do not relate to the sponsor duties, your report will be rejected by the suspensions or re-rates teams.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Checks on maintaining worker contact details

This page explains how you need to assess maintenance of worker contact details during a sponsor visit.

The sponsor must:

- keep a history of sponsored workers' contact details including, where applicable:
 - UK residential address
 - telephone number
 - mobile telephone number
 - email address
- have a system to make sure the details are always up to date

You can expect the sponsor to:

- have in place some kind of system for updating contact details
- have a system for recording the history on contact detail changes
- provide you with a worker's current contact details
- provide you with a worker's contact history

You cannot:

- decide the system the sponsor uses to record the contact details
- insist on both an electronic and paper copy
- insist on the sponsor having a back-up system in case of fire or flood damage
- penalise a sponsor without a worker's contact history, if they have not moved or changed telephone number since being sponsored

When you check the human resources system, consider any differences in contact details between those the sponsor provided and those any worker provided when interviewed. If you find any differences, this indicates that the sponsor may not be fulfilling its duties, so you must check further.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Checks on record keeping and recruitment practices

This page tells you how to assess record keeping and recruitment practices during a sponsor visit.

Worker and Temporary Worker

The sponsor must:

- have a system for keeping the required documents for each migrant sponsored including:
 - professional accreditations and registrations
 - any relevant documents listed in [Keeping records for sponsorship \(appendix D\)](#) of the sponsor guidance
- be able to show a certificate of sponsorship (CoS) was assigned within 6 months of the first advert for the vacancy being placed, if applicable to the route
- keep a copy of the worker's national insurance number as listed in [Keeping records for sponsorship \(appendix D\)](#)
- keep copies of the worker's payslips or other evidence of them having been paid
- be able to show documents to support how they confirmed that the worker can do the job they are sponsored to do
- keep details of all applicants shortlisted for interview (where applicable) in line with [Keeping records for sponsorship \(appendix D\)](#)

Employment contracts

[Keeping records for sponsorship \(appendix D\)](#) does not enforce the requirement to have a contract of employment but, if there is one, the sponsor must keep a copy of it, and you should ask to see it.

You must make sure the conditions are being met if the sponsored worker has been issued:

- with a contract of employment
- with written conditions of employment
- any other document that implies a contract of a sort between the sponsor and the worker

The terms and conditions of employment described in one of these documents must be the same as those stated on the certificate of sponsorship (CoS). If the salary, job title, job description or length of employment differs to that stated on the CoS, you must question the sponsor and worker further. You must be sure the worker is not doing a different job (or a job under different conditions) to the one stated on the CoS.

You must not mark the sponsor as 'Not Met' because they have not issued an employment contract or any other written statement describing terms and conditions of employment.

If, after questioning, it is clear the worker is not doing the role stated on the CoS, you must mark the sponsor as 'Not Met' under 'Recruitment Practices'. If evidence shows the worker has never done the role stated on the CoS, you must also mark the sponsor as 'Not Met' in the 'General Sponsor Duties' section due to an inappropriate CoS having been assigned. A lower salary than stated on the CoS being paid from the start of employment may suggest this. You must quote the relevant paragraph of the sponsor guidance in your report.

You can also mark down the sponsor as 'Not Met' under 'General Sponsor Duties' if either:

- it is evident the worker once did the job stated on the CoS, but has since changed roles
- the sponsor has failed to pay at least the appropriate rate for the job as set out in [Appendix Skilled Worker Occupations of the Immigration Rules](#)

Before marking a sponsor as 'Not Met', you must be satisfied that this is a breach of the requirements set out in the sponsor guidance. You should consider whether there are certain conditions within the guidance that explain a worker may change jobs within the same standard occupation classification (SOC) code.

If there is a 'General Sponsor Duties' breach, the reason will not be for the inappropriate assigning of a CoS because the worker originally performed that role under the conditions stated on the CoS. You will need to mark the sponsor down for failing to meet the job description on the CoS and under 'Migrant Tracking and Monitoring' for failing to report a change of circumstances. You must quote the relevant paragraph numbers of the sponsor guidance.

Where possible, you should obtain a copy of the contract, with the sponsor's permission. This may be relied upon as evidence at a point in the future if the migrant appeals a decision to curtail their leave, or where the sponsor is making representations against compliance action.

You must only ask to see the contract, if it exists, to examine it as potential evidence of a sponsored worker meeting or not meeting their conditions of leave, and the sponsor having assigned a CoS appropriately and recruited responsibly, in line with the sponsor's duties.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Checks on worker tracking and monitoring

This page tells you how to assess the sponsor's systems for checking and monitoring worker attendance during a sponsor visit.

Worker and Temporary Worker

The sponsor must:

- have a system for monitoring worker attendance
- be able to report within 10 working days workers who:
 - doesn't start their sponsored role within 28 days of the recorded start date
 - have 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence - the 10 days for reporting an absence start after the tenth day of absence
 - are dismissed or have otherwise ceased to be sponsored by the sponsor
 - take a period of unpaid leave for more than 4 weeks, such as a sabbatical, unless an exception listed in the [sponsor guidance for employers](#) applies
- ensure that key personnel are still employed by the sponsor and they have reported any changes through the sponsor management system (SMS)

Related content

[Contents](#)

Checking compliance with general sponsor duties

This page tells you how to examine general sponsor duties during a sponsor compliance visit as required in the [sponsor guidance for employers](#).

Some of these duties are generic and others are specific to a type of organisation, sector or route. When examining this area, it is important that you consider the sponsor guidance and the route specific considerations as well as the information below.

You must check the sponsor is complying with their duties. The sponsor must make sure:

- they follow [route or sector specific sponsorship guidelines](#)
- they do not pay a sponsored worker in cash
- they pay, where required, sponsored workers the appropriate rate listed in the relevant code of practice in [Appendix Skilled Occupations of the Immigration Rules](#), where required
- sponsor management system (SMS) users do not share their passwords with anyone else
- they assign a certificate of sponsorship (CoS) in line with the sponsor guidance
- information entered onto a CoS is true and they have dealt honestly with the Home Office
- they inform the Home Office, through the SMS, of any changes to the organisation's:
 - name
 - address
 - structure
 - branches, sites, partnerships or exceptional arrangements
- they inform the Home Office of any mergers, de-mergers, takeovers and partial takeovers, or if they have sold their business or part of their business, within the given timescales stated in the sponsor guidance - this is currently 28 days
- report any effect on a worker's employment as a result of Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) or Cabinet Office Statement of Practice (COSOP) or similar regulatory or legislative provision
- they have sent their application themselves and it has not been sent by a representative on their behalf
- key personnel are permanently based in the UK
- they do not employ illegal workers

Related content

[Contents](#)

Post visit process

This page tells you what to do once you have completed a visit.

You must carry out the following steps to make sure you have completed the sponsor licence assessment:

- check any further information you requested, which was not available to you at the visit
- Home Office system and document verification checks
- write a report
- send the report to your manager by email for sign off and move the visit case to the 'Report Written' column in Jira

Once authorised, your manager will save the countersigned report in the shared folder and allocate to the Allocation, Monitoring and Performance Team to upload it on to Metastorm and complete the process on Jira.

For more information, see the section on [reporting the decision](#).

Related content

[Contents](#)

Visit reports

This page tells you how to make sure you complete the visit report effectively after a sponsor visit.

Recording facts

It is important the visit report contains information based on fact only and not on personal opinion. The information you provide must:

- not contain any subjective comments about anyone you come across while on a visit
- include specific examples of sponsor failings, such as what exactly was missing from a file and the full name of the migrant in question
- only relate to the visit and any following correspondence in relation to the visit
- have evidence to back up any assertions you make in the report, either through:
 - questioning
 - documents seen
 - systems seen

Writing a good visit report

A visit report must, as a minimum:

- provide a record of the checks and interviews that were carried out
- demonstrate how the sponsor is either compliant or in breach of each duty in an area for sponsor visits
- provide a meaningful overview of the sponsor's state of compliance with the sponsor duties, with direct reference to the relevant 'guidance for sponsors' paragraphs
- answer any specific concerns raised by the referrer
- contain enough information for a caseworker's decision focussing on actionable information to enable this while still being condensed and concise

The 'Observations' section of the report may be used to record anything not recorded elsewhere on the form, such as:

- specific tasking matters
- matters which should have been picked up in the pre-visit checks
- other fact-based observations that may have a bearing on the result of the visit

Quality assurance

Sponsor Management have introduced a quality assurance framework, incorporating quality measures for every stage of the end to end visit process.

All reports must be countersigned by a higher executive officer (HEO) or above, unless the report is completed by staff at or above that level.

Managers will also check a cross-section of reports, interview notes and visit preparation documents across a range of visit outcomes, observing a percentage of compliance visits to inform training and development and drive performance.

Report quality

You must check the report for spelling and grammar before you send it to Sponsor Operations. You must also make sure the sponsor guidance is followed correctly.

Rejection criteria

If a countersigned report is not of the required standard, it may be rejected by operations. This is a formal process and the unit will complete a report rejection email. The email will include an annotated copy of the report setting out the reasons for rejection and will be sent to a nominated operations manager for your team, including your SEO, via the Operational Support Team.

A case is not deemed to be complete when the report is rejected. This means you are required to make any necessary amendments and re-send the report. Any rejected report must be amended and returned within 5 working days of receipt.

You must reference all documents seen and verified that are suitable and relevant to the visit in the compliance report and that are not kept in the file.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Litigation considerations

This page tells you what considerations you must make to ensure decisions about application refusals, sponsor downgrades and revocation are well founded and more likely to withstand any challenges brought by sponsors or workers through judicial review or private law claims.

Processes that help reduce potential litigation

To avoid legal proceedings, any action taken against a sponsor or worker by the Home Office must be robust, defensible and in line with current guidance. To make sure this happens, you must:

- make sure you write good quality reports, including correct spelling and use of grammar
- only state facts and evidence-based judgments, not opinions, in your report
- make sure you only include information in your report that is relevant to compliance with the requirements set out in the sponsor guidance
- not include information that is not relevant to requirements specified in the sponsor guidance
- detail any evidence that you gathered which is relevant to your assessment
- not mark a sponsor down for not:
 - making follow-up passport checks
 - signing and dating passport copies
 - keeping next of kin details
 - having any sponsored workers, so you cannot test their systems
 - having lockable cabinets
- score human resource systems and compliance in line with this guidance
- not destroy your handwritten notes
- keep the file while a decision is made if there are actionable compliance breaches
- make sure scanning and document retention procedures are followed so that handwritten notes and other key evidence is readily available

The litigation team may request that you produce a written witness statement where a sponsor or worker is challenging any action taken by the Home Office. The provision of a witness statement is non-negotiable and you must provide this within deadlines set by the litigation team. The team will be working to deadlines set by the court. The litigation team will work with the compliance officer and will remain the liaison between you and Government Legal Department.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Sponsor scores and rating

This page explains the scoring system used when assessing sponsor compliance, and the overall rating system for Worker and Temporary Worker sponsors.

[Worker and Temporary Worker scores](#)

[Worker and Temporary Worker overall rating](#)

Worker and Temporary Worker scores

When rating the compliance of Worker and Temporary Worker licensed sponsors, or prospective sponsors, you must give an overall rating for a sponsor's human resources (HR) compliance in line with the following scores:

- 'Met' – which will usually result in an A-rating
- 'Not Met' – which, for a pre-licence assessment visit, will usually result in refusal or, for a post-licence compliance visit, may result in either a B-rating, suspension or revocation, dependent on the exact circumstances

The visit report template has been produced to reflect this, and 'Met' or 'Not Met' can now be selected from the 'overall rating' drop down menu.

Worker and Temporary Worker overall rating

You must decide the overall rating for Worker and Temporary Worker sponsors based on their compliance with HR requirements.

Sponsor 'Met' all requirements

Where sponsors have met the requirements of all 5 of the HR compliance areas, their overall HR score will be 'Met'. They cannot score 'Met' overall if you have given them a 'Not Met' for any of the 5 areas.

One or more requirements 'Not Met'

If you have scored the sponsor as 'Not Met' for any of the compliance areas on a post-licence compliance visit, you must score the sponsor as 'Not Met' overall.

You must consider the sponsor's overall willingness and ability to meet their sponsor duties, and whether or not they pose a threat to immigration control in writing your report. This will help caseworkers make a licensing decision. You should note in observations if the sponsor:

- appears genuinely not to have understood the sponsor duties
- appears very cooperative and shows eagerness to improve their systems
- has only received the 'Not Met' status because one area of their business or one franchise has let the wider business down and the sponsor is keen to rectify this

- does not give you any major concern about the sponsor posing a threat to immigration control

You must also give evidence in observations where:

- the sponsor totally ignores the sponsor duties and therefore poses a threat to immigration control
- the sponsor has no understanding of the sponsor duties and does not show the ability or eagerness to improve the situation in the future
- the sponsor is not cooperative during the visit and you have based the 'Not Met' scores on the sponsor's unwillingness to provide the required information

Failing to meet all 5 areas will result in the sponsor being suspended in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Worker compliance areas to consider

This page tells you how to examine worker compliance for sponsored workers.

In rating the sponsor's compliance, you must also consider the compliance of the workers with the conditions attached to their leave.

For sponsored workers, you must consider whether:

- the pay is the same or more than stated on the CoS - there are some exceptions where pay can be less
- the sponsor can provide evidence of a resident labour market test, where applicable
- the job role is the same and any change of job has been dealt with in line with the rules on changes of employment as set out in the [sponsor guidance for employers](#)
- any change of hours or location have been reported by the sponsor via the Sponsor Management System (SMS)
- the CoS was assigned in line with the rules set out in the [sponsor guidance for employers and educators](#)

Checks of worker compliance must be recorded under section 5, 'general sponsor duties', with full details of any breaches identified.

The only exception is where the worker's only breach is something the sponsor could not be expected to know and is not something that represents a corresponding sponsor breach, such as, inappropriate supplementary employment. In such cases, you must outline the breach in a supplementary evidence report. Where this highlights concerns regarding the second employer, a referral must also be made through the intel referral procedure.

Any worker-related non-compliance that represents a sponsor breach may lead to a B-rating, or suspension where the overall level of compliance warrants it.

Genuine vacancy

A genuine vacancy is one which:

- requires the jobholder to perform the specific duties and responsibilities for the job and meets all of the requirements of the route
- does not include dissimilar or lower skilled duties

You must consider if:

- the job description seems to be exaggerated deliberately to make it meet the requirements of the route
- the job role does not exist and is being used to enable a worker to come to or stay in the UK

- advertisements are inappropriate for the job on offer and have been tailored to exclude resident workers from being recruited

If a sponsored worker is not undertaking the role for which they are being sponsored and evidence suggests there was not a genuine vacancy for that particular role, you must demonstrate this in the report. Examples of a non-genuine vacancy would include where:

- a sponsored worker recruited as a 'business development manager' is actually found to be undertaking the duties of a care assistant
- a worker has been sponsored as a 'marketing manager' and the sponsor cannot demonstrate evidence to show the worker has carried out appropriate duties such as those listed on the Computer Assisted Structured Coding Tool (CASCOT) for the standard occupation classification code stated on the migrant's CoS

Related content

[Contents](#)

Cross-government co-operation

This page tells you about the principals of cross-government co-operation.

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

Related content

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Supplementary evidence

This page tells you the purpose of a supplementary evidence report.

Supplementary evidence report

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

Related content

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Reporting your findings

This page tells you about reporting your findings following a visit.

During the visit

You must not give any indication of the outcome of the visit. This is clearly stated in the sponsor guidance for employers and educators, so the sponsor should already be aware. If the sponsor asks for an indication, you must tell them you are not able to provide them with feedback. You must not discuss any litigation issues.

Copies of the report

Authorised reports by ops managers must be sent to the [SCN](#) Operational Support Team to inform them the report has been countersigned and is ready to upload to be sent to case working. Sponsor Operations will make a final decision on the action to take and will inform both you and the sponsor.

The sponsor may contact you after a visit to ask for a copy of the report. They have a right to this under the Freedom of Information Act. If they do so, you must contact Sponsor Operations to ask them to send a copy of the final report to the sponsor.

Related content

[Contents](#)

Reporting to intelligence teams and Home Office branding

This page tells you the procedure for reporting to intelligence teams and for reporting misuse of Home Office branding.

Depending on the referral reasons for a visit, there may be interest from other units in the Home Office in your visit report findings. It is important you consider these units when you send your report.

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Official – sensitive: end of section

Home Office branding

If you come across evidence of an organisation still using the former UK Border Agency, or using the UK Visas and Immigration or Home Office logos without permission, you must gather evidence of this and email it to Design102.

If this is a sponsor, you can mark them as 'Not Met' under 'General Sponsor Duties' as it is a breach of Crown copyright.

Related content

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Referrals to Civil Penalties Compliance team

This page tells you about the procedures for referring a potential illegal worker to the Civil Penalties Compliance team (CPCT).

The CPCT are responsible for caseworking referrals from Immigration Compliance and Enforcement teams and other compliance functions with the aim of issuing financial (civil) penalties to employers who are in breach of [section 15 of the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006](#).

Potential illegal workers or those working in breach

During a visit, you may find information about workers who do not have permission to work and who are working illegally or in breach of their conditions, for example a:

- failed asylum seeker
- dependant
- student visitor
- someone claiming to have citizenship or indefinite leave to remain

If you find this sort of information, you must follow the process to refer an illegal worker to CPCT. This guidance will also help you to identify and document potential illegal working on visits.

After the visit, you must check the individual migrants on Atlas. If you find information on an individual showing an immigration breach and suspect illegal working, you must complete a witness statement and Sponsor Management Unit referral form in line with the CPCT referral process. Within this process, you will also need to refer the information to Intelligence.

Findings that may suggest a breach include:

- a student employee with work rights on the rota to work 35 hours a week in term time
- a student visitor who is working
- an employee who claimed to have indefinite leave does not have valid leave
- an employee claiming to be a student is actually a failed asylum seeker

This is not an exhaustive list.

Evidence

You must send copies of any evidence gathered along with a referral to CPCT for them to consider the case.

Examples of evidence you may send include:

- passport or travel document copies
- incriminating documents
- staff rotas
- staff lists
- pay documents

Related content

[Contents](#)

Action plans

This section tells you about the procedures for action plans issued to Worker and Temporary Worker sponsors who have been B-rated after a visit assessment.

[Issues found during a visit](#)

[Re-rates team role](#)

[Time limits of the action plan](#)

[Visits before the 3 month period](#)

[Initial contact](#)

[Revisiting sponsors subject to an action plan](#)

[Final decision after an action plan visit](#)

Issues found during a visit

If issues are found during a visit, you do not need to include points for improvement in the report. You must focus on highlighting each breach and supporting it with relevant facts from the visit.

All action plans are produced by the Re-rates team using the information you provide. You must only detail each issue once in the right section of the visit report and avoid duplication.

Re-rates team role

The Re-rates team will write to a sponsor when downgrading a licence and tell them that, if they want to accept the B-rating, they must:

- agree to have a time bound action plan put in place
- commit to make improvements by signing up to the measures set out in an action plan
- pay a fee to cover the cost of preparing an action plan

Once the sponsor has paid the fee and accepted the action plan, the Re-rates team will contact the Compliance team and inform them an action plan is in place.

Time limits of the action plan

The [sponsor guidance for employers and educators](#) makes it clear that a sponsor is expected to carry out the action plan recommendations within 3 months. This is the maximum time a sponsor can be subject to an action plan. If, during a visit the sponsor has not met the requirements of the plan and the 3 month period has elapsed, you must document this clearly in the report.

Visits before the 3 month period

If the sponsor requests an early visit, you can arrange the visit earlier. You must not visit early, however, unless the sponsor confirms they understand:

- the Home Office will only visit once
- the Home Office would expect a sponsor to take 3 months to carry out the recommendations in the plan
- the Home Office are happy to visit early at the request of the sponsor
- they waive their right to take 3 months to carry out the recommendations in the plan
- the Home Office may take action without a further visit

If the sponsor has failed to carry out the requirements of the action plan, you must not offer to revisit the sponsor within the 3 month period.

Initial contact

The sponsor may request advice on systems to put in place to make sure they meet the requirements of the [action plan](#).

You can provide assistance but you must keep to the following guidelines:

- you must not tell the sponsor what type of human resource (HR) procedures to put in place – if the sponsor is found at a later date not to be complying with the HR systems they could accuse you of telling them what to put in place
- to assist them in designing their own system for meeting the requirement, you must only:
 - describe the HR area
 - inform them of the requirements for that area
- if the sponsor describes to you a system they intend to put in place and want to verify if that would meet the action plan requirements, you can tell them whether you feel it would be sufficient to meet the requirement
- if you have discussed over the phone a system they intend to put in place, you must remind them they will be subject to a check when you visit them:
 - if the system does not stand up to testing, they will not pass the ‘human resource area’ of the visit report and may see their action plan extended or their licence revoked

Revisiting sponsors subject to an action plan

When you visit a sponsor with an action plan in place, the CO is only required to assess compliance with the points specified on the action plan, unless there have been any significant change since the previous visit.

It may be the sponsor has changed the systems to meet the action plan recommendations, but that now means another HR area does not meet the requirements. You must only use the action plan sent out to the sponsor when assessing their compliance. You can find a copy on the correspondence tab on Metastorm.

Opportunity to provide evidence

If there is a reason why the sponsor still does not meet an area of the action plan, you must give them every opportunity to provide evidence to show they do meet the area. You must tell the sponsor you still have concerns and explain them to the sponsor.

The sponsor may be able to answer your concerns by showing you additional processes or systems or may not have understood your questioning. You must not come away from the visit until you have given the sponsor every opportunity to show how they meet the action plan requirements.

New areas of concern

During the visit, you may identify new areas of concern. Those areas of concern must fit into the HR systems or compliance systems you assess as in any other visit.

You cannot expect a sponsor to have systems that go beyond the requirements in the sponsor guidance.

Final decision after an action plan visit

After an action plan visit, you must complete the report as you would for any other visit.

Compliant sponsors

If the sponsor has put the action plan recommendations in place, you must fully complete the HR systems sections of the visit report describing exactly what the sponsor has put in place.

For action plan visits, Sponsor Operations expect a detailed description of how the sponsor is now meeting their duties.

You must be confident you have given the sponsor every opportunity to address your concerns. You must fully complete the report and expand upon your factual findings in the report. Where possible, you must gather evidence to support your arguments.

Claims made in your report must be justified. You must gather any evidence, where possible, and you must make sure the report contains the full details, using facts and not subjective evidence.

Related content

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Quality assurance of reports

In assessing the quality of your visit and report compliance managers will consider whether:

- your report:
 - is based on strong, factual evidence
 - contains subjective opinions
- you assessed enough material in proportion to the size and nature of the organisation
- you gave the sponsor every opportunity to address your concerns
- you gave sponsor ratings in line with the sponsor guidance
- the amount of the evidence presented in the report reflects the areas of the sponsor guidance that state 'we will', 'we will normally' or 'we may' revoke your licence as per Annex C1, C2 and C3 of the guidance for sponsors

If you cover the above issues in your report, you will:

- make sure your decision making process is robust
- assist Sponsor Operations in reaching the correct decision

You must also read about considering [litigation](#).

Curtailing workers' leave when a licence is revoked

You do not need to do anything about curtailing workers' leave if Sponsor Operations intend to revoke a licence. Sponsor Operations will contact the necessary curtailment teams to make sure they take action. The curtailment teams will then make a decision about curtailing any workers' or students' leave.

Curtailing a worker's leave when the licence is not revoked

You may find on a visit a worker is in breach of the conditions of their leave but it may not lead to licence revocation. For example, this may happen when:

- a dependant has said the person linked to their dependent visa is no longer living, working or studying in the UK
- the sponsored worker is not working for the correct employer stated on their visa
- the sponsored worker is not doing the duties they are sponsored to do, or has breached the rules of their migrant application

In these circumstances, you must follow the following steps:

- complete the worker's details in the relevant section of the report
- email the report to the relevant team in Sponsor Operations
- copy the curtailment team for workers and temporary workers into the email

Related content
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Visit documentation

This section tells you about the procedure for handling and storing visit documentation after the visit report is complete.

[Scanning](#)
[Sending documents to Sponsor Operations](#)

Scanning

Certain documentation must be scanned after the visit into the corresponding locations on the shared drive, and named according to the Sponsor Management Unit file naming conventions:

Sponsor Compliance Network - PROC2851 - 2. Ops Manager Zone

The list below tells you what to do with each type of document:

- copies of documents which do not evidence a breach (passports, wage slips, contracts, general company information), and were not specifically requested by Sponsor Operations on the referral – do not scan, but save in SharePoint folder for quality assurance purposes only - Sponsor Licensing Unit - Documents
- copies of documents which do not evidence a breach (passports, wage slips, contracts, general company information), but were specifically requested by Sponsor Operations on the referral – scan documents, but do not save in SharePoint folder
- copies of documents which evidence a breach (passports, wage slips, contracts, company information) – scan and retain in the file in SharePoint folder
- all handwritten documents, including notes taken during the sponsor visit, telephone conversations, letters or emails relating to the sponsor visit - scan and retain in the SharePoint folder
- countersigned visit report- OST will add report to the SharePoint – Sponsor Licensing Unit-Sponsor Specific Files so that caseworkers can use it to make and communicate the decision

For managers to check the quality of decisions, handwritten notes and all other documentary evidence from visits must be retained locally for 2 to 6 weeks, before sending to offsite storage or discarding as in the above list. Once the report is complete and the necessary documents have been scanned, any original documents belonging to the sponsor or migrant must be returned to them by recorded delivery.

Scanned documents must be saved in either the '1.Sponsor Specific Files' folder or the SharePoint – Sponsor Licensing Unit-Sponsor Specific Files. They must not be stored locally. All documents saved must be named in the format:

YYYY-MM-DD _ORGANISATION NAME_ TYPE OF DOCUMENT

Sending documents to Sponsor Operations

Once documents are scanned, if the sponsor is non-compliant and they are requested, officers must send interview notes to Sponsor Operations by mail.

You must not send documents they have not requested - see '[Reporting the decision](#)'

You must send the copies to the following address, clearly marking the sponsor's original application reference (their SPL number) and a covering note:

Sponsor Operations
UK Visas and Immigration
Vulcan House Steel - fourth floor
PO Box 3468
Sheffield
S3 8WA

All original sponsor/ migrant interview notes which have been scanned and retained for 6 months following a compliance audit, can be shredded. This rule applies to all current and future visits, plus those dating back to 2020.

We must conduct a 5% dip sample of historic records (dating back to Jan 2020) to ensure that the notes have been scanned before we shred those that are past the 6-month threshold.

Interview records pre-Jan 2020 should have been sent to Cody 4 (as there are files to link to), but if they are found to have been scanned, they can also be shredded.

Ensure that interview records or interview documentation is retained in filing cabinets located in your local office. They must not be kept at home or in your personal lockers as this is a breach of security.

Ops Managers will not sign off a compliance report until they are satisfied that all documents have been scanned to the relevant folder.

Related content

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Sponsor requests general advice

This page tells you what to do if a sponsor requests general advice.

Compliance officer limits on giving advice

You must remember that sponsors and members of the general public will not see you as a compliance officer but as a Home Office member of staff. There will be times when they contact you for advice or information because they have your contact details. Remember, you must:

- not provide information or advice on immigration subjects outside of sponsorship:
 - this includes in relation to areas where you have previously worked, as your knowledge may now be out of date
- refer the person on to the relevant unit or contact centre

Request for sponsorship information

You can give information that directly relates to the sponsorship requirements but make sure you know the correct policy before giving out information. If the sponsor request is complicated and you are not clear on the sponsor requirements, discuss with your line manager. If you still don't have the answer, you must email your query to one of the following teams:

Official – sensitive: start of section

The information on this page has been removed as it is restricted for internal Home Office use.

Official – sensitive: end of section

You must not give out these email addresses to sponsors or members of the general public. They are for internal staff only. If you let members of the public have them, you will prevent the relevant teams from dealing with internal queries.

Employers can email the Business Helpdesk or call the employers' helpline on 0300 123 4699 for:

- sponsorship and employers' helpline questions
- assistance with password resets
- sponsor management system queries
- licence application queries

Other useful numbers and email addresses

For queries relating to European nationals, call 0845 010 5200.

For queries relating to nationality and citizenship, call 0845 010 5200.

For queries relating to whether a representative is Office of Immigration Service Commissioner (OISC) registered, call 0845 000 0046 or email OISC.

Related content

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Employer allegations and requests for checks

This section tells you what to tell a member of the public if they want to make an allegation.

If an employer wants to make an allegation about another sponsor or about a worker, then they can contact the sponsorship and employers' helpline. They can:

- telephone 0300 123 4699
- email the Business Helpdesk

Employer requests for checks

If an employer wants to check if a worker has a legal right to work, they can contact the sponsorship and employer's helpline. They can:

- telephone 0300 123 4699
- email the Business Helpdesk
- [check a job applicant's right to work: use their share code - GOV.UK](#)

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