

International recruitment: conversations from experience

Tuesday 04 October 2022

Questions answered by the panellists

- **Q. How many overseas workers would you recommend in one go from an agency? Any advice?**

A. Maybe start with a few and see how it goes. It really depends on how many staff you need and how many you can accommodate and train when they first arrive. The home office will grant COS based on your unfilled requirements.
- **Q. How did you go about selecting an agency if you use one? What criteria did you use? What checks did you have to do on the agency to ensure there was no exploitation?**

A. Check they are the NHS ethical recruitment list. Also talk to the key principals in the agencies to see if they have a good understanding of your business and your needs. It's important that you have a good working relationship as the agency will be a very close partner to help you fulfil your needs.
- **Q. How do you ensure that Senior Carers have the correct knowledge and skills?**

A. Strong English language scores, good communication when interviewing are essential. We specifically look for a strong understanding of dementia, how they have dealt with challenging behaviour issues, how they demonstrated person centred care. We stayed away from terminology but tried to understand their experiences and what their current roles are to see if there is synergy between the values you desire and the ability they have.
- **Q. What countries are proving the best target areas for domiciliary care workers?**

A. No specific countries. You need drivers so countries such as the middle east prove harder as less women drive. You can specify that you need staff who can obtain an international driver's licence with a view of obtaining a UK driving licence with 12 months of arrival.
- **Q. Have you tried raising the hourly rate for UK staff as an incentive for recruitment before going down the route of the larger investment in overseas recruitment? And when you have done international recruitment, has your local authority supported with the costs of IR or has the funding come from within your business?**

A. Local recruitment has and always should be priority – be active in jobs fairs, increasing pay, offering bonuses, consider every job platform, social media, referral payments for friends. In terms of pay rates, you cannot discriminate between domestic and international staff. The minimum pay rate set by the

Home Office if £10.10p ph. Every region varies and rural locations are more at risk as the proximity and location of a workforce is much less dense.

Rural, coastal areas like ours compete heavily against the hospitality and retail sectors so staff turnover was high.

- **Q. Some agencies are recruiting nurses as social care workers. Have you done this and have those skills and experience worked out?**
 - A. We are a residential service, but nursing homes often ask this. The OSCE is taking approx. 8 months to complete and pass. In that time, you don't want to be paying someone a nursing rate when they aren't taking on the full role as it is not cost effective. You could potentially sponsor candidates as senior carers, get them trained to this level, do CHAPS and then OSCE. When they qualify and start doing the nursing role, you will need to issue a new COS for the role of a nurse.
- **Q. Is DBS done before or after they come to the UK? How do you check criminal records from abroad?**
 - A. A DBS can only really be completed once they arrive as you need site of original documentation. Candidates require a police clearance from every country they have lived in for more than a year for the past 10 years. It is a grey area if they can start prior to the DBS coming through so best put a risk assessment into place and discuss with your CQC inspector. Candidates need proof of address documents to get a DBS so assist them to get their bank accounts set up ASAP and pick up their BRP cards. DBS can be done once they have these.
- **Q. If you go through the process and hire an international employee, but it does not work out despite the process/training/probation period etc, how does one let them go?**
 - A. The same way as any employee. Follow your normal your disciplinary process, discuss with your insurers, follow UK employment law and then dismiss. Document it all. Once dismissed, notify the home office on the SMS.
- **Q. May we have a list of life skills just as a guide to know where to start**
 - A. A list but not limited to:
 1. cultural awareness
 2. setting up of bank accounts
 3. the British way of doing things
 4. understanding what our residents of this age group like
 5. understanding the schooling system
 6. understanding renting and laws surrounding that
 7. bringing dependents
 8. trying to understand their culture and how it differs here in the UK
 9. cooking, doing laundry, no bidets in toilets, hygiene and cleanliness.

It's important to remember that every country has different expectations and standards and ways of doing things. Try to get an understanding of how they do things and then you can train around it.

- **Q. How long do you provide accommodation for? The whole period of their employment?**
A. No – ideally you arrange it for a short period of time. Perhaps 3 months with a view to candidates finding their own accommodation. We're in a very rural area so had accommodation available for 6 months to 8 months. It gave the candidates an opportunity to really focus on the role, understand renting, buy cars etc and then move out.
- **Q. How much does Agency charge per candidate?**
A. Depends on the agency. I've seen charges ranging from £250 per candidate to £6000. It just depends what it includes.
- **Q. Have your overseas staff had to come in at the Senior level to meet the salary requirements for sponsorship?**
A. Yes, but they need training in the way that we do things. We took on candidates that were trained nurses in their own country, but the cultural differences are immense. We took them through the full carer role (personal care, moving and handling etc), and then trained them in the senior role after a few months (meds, risks assessments, dealing with 3rd parties etc). Candidates need to meet RQF3, don't just recruit anyone that applies.

Questions answered by a representative of the Department of Health and Social Care

- **Q. Please can you outline the visa application process and provide timelines too. What restrictions, if any, do international student visas have regarding hours that can be worked? For hard to recruit social care positions (non- Social Work qualified roles) can overseas candidates be employed in these whilst holding a skilled worker visa?**
A. Whilst still on Student Permissions, an individual is able to work 20 hours per week in term time and unlimited hours outside of that.

If they wish to then switch into employment, they will have to apply for a job at an organisation which is a UKVI registered sponsor which, if the applicant is successful, can then assign them a Certificate of Sponsorship in support for a Visa application (most likely in the Health and Care Route).
- **Q. Is there a central resource containing information regarding Social Work in a UK context for international recruits?**
A. There is not currently a central resource that contains overarching information regarding Social Work in a UK context for international recruits. DHSC are however currently developing resources to help with international recruitment

and will consider the inclusion of this suggestion in future guidance.

■ **Q. Is there a central resource introducing international workers to ‘daily life’ in the UK.**

A. There is not currently a central resource on ‘daily life’ in the UK for international recruits, as it is recommended that providers develop these as part of their induction packagers, so that they are tailored to local areas.

National Care Forum pastoral support guidance for providers can be found at [Pastoral Care Guide for International Recruitment in Social Care - National Care Forum](#)

■ **Q. Is there any guidance on how to attract candidates from overseas?**

A. DHSC and Skills for Care are co-developing a toolkit on international recruitment for providers. This will include information about best practice when recruiting overseas candidates.

It is important to refer to the code of best practice for international recruitment when recruiting overseas candidates which can be found at [Code of practice for the international recruitment of health and social care personnel in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).

■ **Q. We've been approached by overseas candidates already in the UK on a student visa, asking if we would sponsor them with permanent employment (3-5 years) Is this the same application process?**

A. If individuals on student visas wish to switch into employment, they will have to apply for a job at an organisation which is a UKVI registered sponsor which, if the applicant is successful, can then assign them a Certificate of Sponsorship in support for a Visa application (most likely in the Health and Care Route).