

Support for newly qualified non-EEA GP trainees

The purpose of this briefing is to outline the support that NHS England is now providing to enable and encourage non-EEA nationals on the Health Education England (HEE) GP Training Programme to remain in England to practise after they qualify.

The paper also sets out the roles of both local NHS England and HEE offices in delivering this support.

Background

Health Education England acts as the proxy visa sponsor for non-EEA International Medical Graduates (IMGs) on the GP Training Programme that require visas to live and train in the UK.

After completing their training, these GPs either need to return overseas, find employment with an employer that holds a tier 2 visa sponsorship licence or if they have already been in the UK for 5 years or more apply to normalise their status as a UK resident.

Over the past two years, a small number of trainees intending to stay in the UK after qualifying have found it difficult to find employment at practices that hold a valid sponsorship licence primarily due to the low volume of practices that hold such licences, and the increasing the number of newly qualified GPs entering the workforce.

Further, the inclusion of doctors within the UK Government's visa cap was preventing sufficient numbers of practices from obtaining licences.

During the summer of 2018 the Government removed doctors (including GPs) from the visa cap meaning that there are no longer any restrictions on the number of practices that can hold licences.

Following this, NHS England launched a package of support for both newly qualified non-EEA GPs to encourage and support them to remain in England after qualifying, and for GP practices wishing to obtain a sponsorship licence.

Support package for newly qualified non-EEA GP trainees

Since the summer of 2018, NHS England has been offering the following package of support:

- Practice matching

NHS England will support non-EEA GP trainees by matching them with vacancies at practices that hold visa sponsorship licences in their preferred locations.

Please note that standard recruitment processes then apply for the roles within these practices.

Non-EEA trainees considering staying in England after qualifying are encouraged to contact england.intrecruitment@nhs.net as early as possible to help ensure that practices with sponsorship licences will be available in the areas where they would like to work after qualifying.

- Reimbursement of visa costs

NHS England will reimburse tier 2 visa application costs for the sponsored GP and their dependents if they remain in England to practise after qualifying.

Other non-EEA GPs working in England may also request this support.

- Relocation support

NHS England will provide reimbursement for costs (up to £5000) of relocating personal belongings or dependents from overseas once fully qualified. This will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and should be applied for prior to any relocation activities.

Trainees from EEA countries staying in England to practise after qualifying may also request this support.

The claims form embedded below provides more information on eligibility for the financial support and details of how claims should be submitted.



Visa
Reimbursement For

Support package for practices

Practices that apply for a visa sponsorship licence between 1 June 2018 and 31 January 2020 may request reimbursement of the costs for the following from NHS England:

- Sponsorship licence application fee
- Visa sponsorship certificates
- Immigration Skills Charges for the first two years for any non-EEA GP that they employ

The claims form embedded above provides more details on eligibility for the financial support and details of how claims should be submitted.

NHS England and partners will be issuing new and updated guidance for practices on how to obtain a sponsorship licence shortly however in the meantime the presentation embedded below provides an overview of the process.



tier2 v0.4.ppsx

Role of GP Specialty Training in local HEE offices

HEE's GP Schools in local offices have a key role in promoting the package of support to their IMGs and ensuring that IMGs are aware that this support is available.

GP Schools are encouraged to engage with their IMGs early about their intentions for after they qualify and to direct them to contact england.intrecruitment@nhs.net to register for the support.

This early engagement is key to ensuring that we can retain high numbers of these trainees as part of the GP workforce after they qualify.

It would also be beneficial for GP Schools to build and maintain relationships with their local NHS England colleagues, who will be able to work together to match GP trainees with practices at a local level giving the GP trainee confidence in their future within the general practice workforce in England.

Role of NHS England national team

NHS England's national team will:

- Regularly communicate this offer to non-EEA GP trainees
- Maintain an overview of trainees due to qualify and their preferred areas, practices with Tier 2 visa sponsorship licenses, and identify gaps
- Connect doctors requiring practice matching with local contacts
- Process reimbursements to practices for the costs set out above

Role of NHS England regional/local offices

NHS England's regional/local offices are responsible for:

- Identifying practices that already hold sponsorship licences and providing this information to the national team
- Promoting the package of financial and practical support available to practices – particularly in areas where there has been an identified gap in the number of practices registered nationally as holding sponsorship licences
- Providing immediate assistance to the national team in any instances where there is an urgent need to find a sponsoring practice locally

- Working with their local HEE GP School to identify GP trainees at risk of leaving the country and providing practice matching at a local level
- Providing feedback to the national team on local actions
- Acting as a point of contact for the national team in implementing the scheme

NHS England regional teams will be issued with a regular report providing a RAG status on the number of practices in each DCO team registered nationally as holding visa sponsorship licences.

Progress to date

By 15 January 2019 over 110 IMGs at different stages on the GP training programme have registered with NHS England to access the support package with approximately 30 receiving support so far to find roles at practices holding sponsorship licences.

By 15 January 102 practices and federations across England are registered with the national team as holding visa sponsorship licences.

Further enquiries

Any enquiries about the content of this briefing can be submitted to england.intrecruitment@nhs.net.