

## **International Induction Programme and Return to Practice Schemes: guidance on international GPs requiring visas to work in England (November 2020)**

This briefing note sets out the processes that should be followed for international GPs requiring visas that apply to join the International Induction Programme (IIP) or Return to Practice (RtP) Schemes (currently known as the Induction and Refresher/I&R Scheme). Separate processes are in place for GPs requiring visas that enter the workforce via NHS England's International GP Recruitment (IGPR) Programme.

From 1 January 2021, all EEA nationals (except Irish citizens) will require visas to work in the UK.

NHS England and Improvement (NHSE&I) has obtained legal advice confirming that international GPs on the schemes should not be undertaking supervised placements in the UK on standard visitor visas as this may be a breach of the visa rules.

These GPs should instead undertake the supervised placement on a Health and Care (Tier 2) visa.

GPs on other visas such as a family/spouse visa may be able to undertake the traditional bursary funded placement if the Home Office confirms that this does not breach the terms of their visa.

EEA nationals that are already resident in the UK before 1 January 2021 will not require a visa to join or continue with the schemes. These GPs should however apply for settlement or pre-settlement under the EU Settlement Scheme before 30 June 2021.

GPs on a Health and Care (Tier 2) visa must have an employing practice from the start of their scheme placement and undertake the placement under a formal contract of employment.

They may however undertake some or all of their supervision at other locations providing that the employing practice indicates which locations when assigning a certificate of sponsorship to the GP on the online UK visa system.

These GPs should receive a salary instead of a bursary for the duration of their supervision in line with that provided to IGPR GPs. This will be reimbursed to the employing practice from NHS England using the existing arrangements for IGPR GPs. GPs that are already resident in the UK before 1 January 2021 do not require visas and will therefore continue to receive a bursary payment.

NHS England will also reimburse the GP via the employing practice for the costs of their Health and Care visa and the visas of any dependents.

International GPs requiring visas to work in the UK may undertake the scheme's assessments from their country of residency prior to securing employment at a

sponsoring practice. Progression to the next stages of the scheme will however be dependent on the international GP first securing employment in England.

Advice and support on how to find employment is offered to international GPs on the schemes however neither Health Education England (HEE) or NHSE&I are able to guarantee employment to the GP after completing the assessments.

If employment is not obtained within 12 months of passing the assessments then the international GP requiring a visa will be removed from the scheme and must resit the assessments again if they wish to continue on the scheme.

## **Process and responsibilities**

GPs applying for direct entry to the International Induction Programme or Return to Practice Schemes must complete and submit an application form to HEE's GP National Recruitment Office.

This form includes a section where the applicant should indicate whether they would require a visa to work in the UK.

Any applicant indicating that a visa would be required is then referred to NHS England's national primary care workforce team. The national team will issue guidance to the GP on the visa requirements for proceeding with the scheme and advice on how to apply for roles within practices in England.

The national team will also share the GP's details with the relevant NHS England regional team.

The regional team is responsible for:

- Liaising directly with the GP to understand their preferences in terms of practice location and type
- Identifying any suitable practices that are currently recruiting in their area that hold or could obtain a Tier 2 visa sponsorship licence to employ the GP
- Co-ordinating with their local HEE office to ensure that the selected practice is able to provide supervision under HEE's "hub and spoke" training model or agreeing a model where the supervision is delivered at existing HEE training practices nearby
- Ensuring that the employing practice fully understands all of the processes involved in employing a GP on the schemes
- Providing regular updates to the national team on the arrangements that have been made locally for the GP
- Advising the national team if it has not been possible to identify any practices locally that are willing to employ the GP. Where this is the case progression on the scheme will be dependent on the GP arranging their own employment
- Financial reporting to the national team on the salary costs that need to be reimbursed to practices within regional primary care allocations
- The processing of payments to practices for any salary costs for GPs on the schemes

## **Role of local HEE leads**

To reduce the risk that some applicants could join the scheme under an inappropriate visa, local HEE leads should confirm as part of Learning Needs Assessments that GPs who require a visa to work in the UK have already indicated this on their application forms.

Any concerns that a GP may have inadvertently not specified this on their application form should be reported to the GPNRO so that appropriate checks can be made.

HEE leads should also ensure that the GP understands that progression beyond the assessment stage will be dependent on whether employment at a sponsoring practice can be arranged for the supervision stage of the scheme. Neither HEE nor NHSE&I are able to make any firm commitments that employment will be available once the assessments have been completed.

Once contacted by a NHS England regional team about any GP requiring a visa, it is the responsibility of the local HEE lead to ensure that supervision can be undertaken at the GP's employing practice or in training practices nearby.

### **Further information**

If you have any questions about this guidance, please contact [england.intrecruitment@nhs.net](mailto:england.intrecruitment@nhs.net).