



July 2025

CHANGES TO SPONSORED WORK ROUTES

The White Paper on 12 May 2025 introduced drastic changes to a wide range of UK immigration categories. Please see our [note](#) which sets out these proposed changes.

On 1 July 2025, a Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules was subsequently published which implemented the previously proposed changes to the sponsored work routes.

SKILLED WORKERS

I set out below the key changes for Skilled Workers who will be sponsored (i.e. are assigned with a Certificate of Sponsorship) on or after 22 July 2025:

Skills Threshold

- + In most instances, Skilled Workers must be sponsored for a role at RQF level 6; roles which typically require a university degree or higher.
- + If the role is on the time-limited Immigration Salary List or Temporary Shortage List (the **Lists**), Skilled Workers can be sponsored for a lower skilled role at RQF levels 3-5; roles which do not require a university degree. The Lists are expected to be phased out by 31 December 2026.

- + Those being sponsored for roles on the Lists will not be able to bring eligible family members (**Dependants**) to the UK, unless it is a Dependant Child who is born in the UK or where the Skilled Worker has sole parental responsibility.

Skilled Workers sponsored in RQF levels 3-5 before 22 July 2025 can continue to extend and switch roles. Their Dependants can also hold UK immigration permission.

Salary Threshold

- + In most instances, Skilled Workers must be paid the higher of:
 - the general threshold of £41,700 per year (an increase from £38,700 per year); or
 - the increased going rate for the occupation.

Skilled Workers sponsored before 22 July 2025 will need to meet the higher salary thresholds when they extend or switch roles.

GLOBAL BUSINESS MOBILITY SENIOR OR SPECIALIST (GBM) WORKERS.

For GBM Workers sponsored on or after 22 July 2025, they must meet the higher general threshold of £52,500 per year (an increase from £48,500 per year).



WHAT UK EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO NOW

Where possible, UK employers should sponsor prospective employees before 22 July 2025.

Where that is not possible, they should:

- + check whether the role is on the Lists and if so, assess the prospective employees' family situation;
- + plan to recruit settled workers for roles at RQF levels 3-5. Settled workers include those who are British or Irish nationals; EU nationals under the EU Settlement Scheme; or other nationals who hold Indefinite Leave to Remain / Permanent Residence or Right of Abode in the UK.
- + assess potential promotion of sponsored workers to roles at RQF level 6; and
- + plan for higher salary thresholds for new sponsored workers and for existing sponsored workers who are extending their visas or switching employers.

WHAT IS YET TO COME

The UK Government will continue to release Statements of Changes in Immigration Rules to implement the proposals set out in the White Paper.

We therefore expect the following to be introduced:

- + increase in Immigration Skills Charge by 32%;
- + for Skilled Workers and other work routes, raising the English language requirements from level B1 (intermediate) to B2 (independent user) of the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages;
- + English language requirements for Dependants of Skilled Workers and other work routes;
- + Graduate Visa length being reduced from 2 years to 1.5 years;
- + increase the qualifying period for Indefinite Leave to Remain from 5 years to 10 years in most instances.

CONCLUSION

It is important that UK employers and individuals are kept abreast of the various changes and when the changes will be implemented.

Please do contact us should you require any advice or assistance.

CONTACT US



JESSICA SMART

Partner

+ 44 20 7809 2612
jessica.smart
@stephensonharwood.com



KRISH RAVIN

Associate

+ 44 20 7809 2540
krish.ravin
@stephensonharwood.com