

LOOKING GLASS CARE / FREE PRACTICAL GUIDE

International care recruitment: checks and dates

Care managers, employers, recruiters and workforce administrators in England.

A practical introduction to identity, right to work, sponsorship, references, DBS and driving checks, with a separate offline date reminder tool. Apply checks fairly to all recruits. A checklist organises evidence; it cannot decide immigration eligibility.



Why this matters to me

Across 15 years in settings from SEN schools to HM Prisons and other care services, I have come to value checks that staff can understand and managers can follow through. Good recruitment should protect the people receiving support and treat the person joining the team with dignity.

How to use this guide

Read the five short lessons, work through the checklist and use the record sheet to choose your next action. Allow around 25-35 minutes plus time for your own review. Keep personal records securely; use anonymised notes for team learning.

This is general educational information for England, checked against the sources listed at the end. It is not an accredited qualification, clinical assessment or individual legal advice.

Learn and apply

1. Check the actual role and route before recruiting

Start with the job duties, occupation code, employer and proposed work location. Sponsorship is not needed for every international applicant: some people already have permission allowing the role. A sponsor licence is not a worker's visa, and a certificate of sponsorship is an electronic record, not permission to start work. Current GOV.UK guidance limits care worker and senior care worker codes 6135 and 6136 to eligible extension, update or in-country switching routes; do not advertise a general new overseas care-worker visa route. Other eligible health occupations have different rules. Check current salary, sponsor and applicant requirements for the exact route. For sponsored care workers and senior care workers in England, the employer must be CQC registered. Review the ethical recruitment code, including restrictions on actively targeting red-list countries and rules applying to amber-list agreements. Seek regulated immigration advice for individual eligibility or sponsorship decisions.

2. Complete and record the right-to-work check

Complete the prescribed check before employment starts. For online checks, use the employer-facing Home Office service with the worker's share code and date of birth, match the photograph to the person and save the actual result with the check date. A screenshot supplied by an applicant is not a substitute for your own online check. Read the permitted work, hours and expiry or follow-up information. For a permitted manual route, check original acceptable documents and the person; a scanned passport alone does not complete that process. Copy the required identity, expiry and relevant endorsement pages. The current Home Office guide explicitly says the passport front cover no longer has to be copied. Physical biometric residence cards or permits are not acceptable substitutes for the required online proof. British and Irish citizens use the applicable document or approved digital verification route. Keep right-to-work evidence securely during employment and for two years afterwards, then securely destroy it. Check all recruits consistently without nationality-based assumptions.

Learn and apply

3. Keep permission, documents and follow-up dates separate

Record visa permission, right-to-work check date, any required follow-up, passport expiry and sponsorship records as separate items. A passport expiry is not automatically a permission-to-work expiry. Time-limited permission generally needs a follow-up shortly before it ends; the current guidance does not require repeat checks solely because a person holds EUSS pre-settled status. Where an in-time application, appeal or other qualifying situation prevents normal verification, follow Home Office guidance and use the Employer Checking Service where required. A Positive Verification Notice normally provides a six-month statutory excuse from the date stated in it; use the notice and current guidance rather than inventing a grace period. A date reminder must trigger review, not automatic dismissal or an assumption of unlawful work. The Home Office published final right-to-work guidance effective from 1 October 2026. Check the current scope, including broader working arrangements and any extended liability, before assigning checks. Assess the actual contractual arrangement; a job title or label alone does not decide the duty.

4. Verify identity, history, references and DBS appropriately

Check identity and name changes, full employment history, explanations for gaps, relevant qualifications and professional registration. For regulated care services, Schedule 3 requires satisfactory evidence of conduct in relevant previous employment and, so far as reasonably practicable, verification of why relevant employment with children or vulnerable adults ended. Obtain references through independently verified contact details and resolve inconsistencies; a fixed number of references alone does not prove suitability. Request only the DBS level and barred-list information legally available for the role. DBS certificates have no official expiry date and do not cover periods lived abroad. Consider relevant overseas criminal-record evidence and document limits and follow-up. When using the Update Service, obtain consent, establish legal entitlement and match the workforce, type and level. Check the original certificate in person; a copy or video view is insufficient. Set a reasoned review schedule and respond to new information. Do not retain full sensitive certificates indefinitely or treat a DBS result as the whole recruitment decision.

Learn and apply

5. Check driving entitlement and set useful reminders

If the role includes driving, use the DVLA non-GB licence checker for the person's residence status, vehicle category, test country and licence history. Many new GB residents with a full car or motorcycle licence from outside the EU can drive for 12 months, but this is not a universal rule. A designated-country exchange window can be five years while permission to drive on the original licence is only 12 months; these are different dates. EU licence and Ukraine-scheme cases can have different rules, and bus or lorry categories require separate checks. Confirm the official result, licence validity, restrictions and insurance for the actual work before assigning driving. The included offline tool calculates reminders from dates you verify: 90, 30 and 7 days beforehand. It does not calculate legal entitlement, inspect documents, contact the Home Office or send automatic reminders. Use an employee reference rather than passport or visa numbers, print the result and enter the reminders in your secure HR calendar.

Check your understanding

An employee's DBS certificate is three years old and their passport expires next month. Do these dates alone mean they cannot work?

Suggested answer: No. DBS has no official expiry date; review suitability and any required recheck under the role and policy. Passport expiry is separate from permission to work. Complete the appropriate checks and assess the actual evidence and conditions. A reminder is a prompt for review, not an eligibility verdict.

Practical review checklist

Mark each item: checked / action needed / not applicable. Note the evidence and reason, rather than treating a tick as proof.

[] Actual role, occupation code and permitted recruitment route checked.

[] Sponsor, CQC and individual permission requirements distinguished.

[] Prescribed right-to-work check completed before the start date.

[] Identity, photograph, names and relevant restrictions checked.

[] Evidence and check date retained securely; follow-up owner assigned.

[] References, employment gaps and reasons for leaving followed up.

[] DBS type, workforce, consent and overseas-history limits checked.

[] Driving entitlement, work use and insurance checked where relevant.

[] Expiry dates and organisation review dates labelled separately.

[] Changes in circumstances and upcoming guidance reviewed.

My next three actions

1. Action: _____

Owner / help needed: _____ Review date: _____

2. Action: _____

Owner / help needed: _____ Review date: _____

3. Action: _____

Owner / help needed: _____ Review date: _____

Your working record

Use a copy for each review, support plan or referral. Keep identifying and sensitive information in your own secure system.

Employee reference and role (no passport number)

Check route, checker and evidence location

Permission conditions and confirmed follow-up date

DBS type, date and next policy review

DVLA outcome, date verified and driving review date

Outstanding action, responsible person and deadline

Sources and next steps

Information checked on 18 September 2026. Guidance and local pathways can change; use these primary sources for current detail.

[Home Office \(2025\). Employer's guide to right to work checks, current guidance at 18 September 2026](#)

[Home Office \(2026\). Draft employer's guide, published 11 September: states commencement 1 October 2026](#)

[GOV.UK, Health and Care Worker visa: your job](#)

[UK Parliament, Health and Social Care Act 2008 \(Regulated Activities\) Regulations 2014, Schedule 3](#)

[Disclosure and Barring Service, Check someone's criminal record](#)

[Disclosure and Barring Service \(2026\). Update Service: employer guide, updated August 2026](#)

[DVLA, Driving in Great Britain on a non-GB licence, interactive checker](#)

[DVLA, Exchange a non-GB driving licence, interactive checker](#)

[Department of Health and Social Care \(2025\). Code of practice for international recruitment of health and social care personnel in England](#)

Choose what helps you next

Explore the matching free mini-course, browse related resources or ask Looking Glass Care about practical support. The guide and mini-course do not include an individual assessment or a regulated qualification.

[Free resources](#)

[Free and paid training](#)

[Help me choose](#)

[Book a free 30-minute consultation](#)

[Email \[info@lookingglasscare.co.uk\]\(mailto:info@lookingglasscare.co.uk\)](#)