

Supporting international staff



We are
compassionate
and **inclusive**

It is important that systems and organisations work collaboratively to support retention of international colleagues and work to understand how to help international colleagues to feel recognised and valued, build their careers and feel a sense of true belonging within the NHS.

Ethical international recruitment remains a workforce priority with plans to recruit in the NHS at scale over coming years as set out in both the NHS Long Term Plan and the NHS People Plan. This may mean refocusing efforts to ensure you understand the specific needs of all your NHS people in order to truly create the conditions that enable international colleagues to stay and thrive in the NHS.

Things to consider

- What additional support can be offered to international colleagues who will be learning how to work in the NHS alongside potentially living in England for the first time

- Understanding the reasons and motivations your international colleagues may have for moving to work in the NHS, and are these being met?

- What is the best use of your international colleagues' experience and skills?
- What support is there for international colleagues outside of work and how could you offer support if they are missing home or are feeling lonely?
- Do your international colleagues feel included and that they belong?
- Do international colleagues with the same first languages have opportunities to interact with one another?
- Do your international colleagues have the same access to predictable and flexible working patterns as other colleagues?

Making this happen

Leaders can:

- Improve understanding and support international colleagues by learning about different dialects, colloquialisms and cultures.
- Foster cultures that champion the voice of international colleagues through the development of international communities via staff networks, shared lived experiences and inclusive pastoral support.

Managers can:

- Take part in cultural awareness training to help support international colleagues to better integrate both in and out of the workplace.
- Acknowledge the richness of experience that international colleagues bring and build this into career and talent management conversations.
- Provide a safe space where international colleagues can raise concerns and speak up.

Case studies

- Watch this video to see how Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust supported their internationally recruited staff with dedicated training within their trust.

- West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust are establishing a 'safe spaces' programme which will proactively reach out to overseas colleagues and facilitate and nurture confidential spaces where they will feel confident to speak up.
- Hertfordshire and West Essex ICS are in collaboration with the local community to facilitate networks for internationally recruited nurses, where volunteers help people with accommodation, group activities, access to local services and the provision of digital champions.

Tools and further reading

- NHS England and Improvement support on international recruitment can be found on the NHS Futures platform.
- Keep up to date with interventions and practical solutions on NHS England and NHS Improvement's website.
- NHS Employers international recruitment toolkit help you plan your approach to overseas recruitment activity.
- NHS England and Improvement have developed an interactive and practical Civility and Respect toolkit with a framework for organisations to use.
- Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust has developed online learning modules on establishing a just and learning culture.