

## **Pillar one: Creating strong foundations**

The first pillar focuses on creating strong foundations in the months before your new recruits arrive in the UK. First impressions are important for anyone starting a new job, but consider how they might feel as they prepare to leave behind friends and family, familiar surroundings, language, and cultures to start a new life in a different country.

Review your recruitment timeline to consider where and when your organisation can offer support. The International Recruitment Toolkit contains a useful recruitment timeline for overseas nurse and midwife recruitment (page 61) and overseas doctors (page 90).

As well as the support you offer locally, diaspora groups can also provide the pastoral and professional support your international nurses and midwives will need. A list of diaspora groups can be found in the International Recruitment Toolkit (page 73) and can be shared with your new recruits so they can find out about the support available to them before they arrive.

## How to create strong foundations



**For international staff**

**Maintaining contact**

You should engage with new recruits early and often. This could include a one-to-one pre-arrival welcome call to get to know them personally, identify what support they may need, and to introduce them to key colleagues they will be working with. Getting to know their reasons for coming to work in the UK at this stage will help to support their personal and professional development, build trust and their attachment to their job, team, organisation, and the life they are seeking in the UK.

### **Welcome packs**

It is good practice to provide your new recruits with a welcome pack. These can be shared prior to arrival and could include information about the UK, the local area, dialect, the organisation, and emergency contacts (including information for if things go wrong). You can also include details of staff networks, diaspora groups and how your new recruits can access support if they observe or experience bullying or harassment.

Go to the International Recruitment Toolkit to use our welcome pack checklist (pages 48-49).

### **Accommodation**

The current cost-of-living crisis has led to a shortage of rental properties in some areas. Consider your local accommodation offer and/or work as a system to find suitable accommodation for people before they arrive.

Some organisations with limited accommodation have found it beneficial to make links with local university accommodation providers. See the example from University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust in the International Recruitment Toolkit (page 47). Other organisations have used web-based searches and apps to find accommodation.

Internally, engage with staff to find out if any can offer a spare room in their home. Those who can help may be eligible for the government's rent-a-room scheme, which lets people earn up to £7,500 per year tax free from letting out furnished accommodation in their home.

### **Map skillsets and qualification**

Research shows 78 per cent of international nurses had been qualified over five years and almost half (48 per cent) had been qualified for more than ten years prior to migration (University of Huddersfield (2022))

International Nurses and their Initial Integration into NHS England's Healthcare Workforce: A Population Analysis).

You should meet with your new recruits to discuss the skills and experience they have gained from working in international healthcare settings. It is important to recognise and make the most of their skillsets by placing them in their preferred clinical area, as this will support their ongoing progression and help them to feel valued. If this isn't possible, have an open and honest discussion about next steps and the possibility of internal transfers, if and when a vacancy becomes available, and the process (if any) they would need to go through to be able to transfer.

Taking the time to learn about prior experience and approaches to healthcare used across the globe also encourages mutual learning and should be shared across teams to support integration.

### **For leaders, managers and the wider workforce**

#### **Manager guide**

A managers' guide can help to prepare managers and team members for working with overseas staff and can include information that will help your new recruits transition smoothly into their new roles. Take a look at the Managers Guide for Overseas Nurses produced by the CapitalNurse international recruitment consortium. You might find it a helpful resource to support the Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) preparation and pastoral support of your international nurses.

#### **Engage existing staff**

Encourage your existing international staff to share their lived experience of relocating to the UK with new recruits. They will also have a unique understanding of the support new recruits may need to adapt to the cultural and working differences of the NHS and can provide you with key insights as you develop your support offer.

## **Good practice examples**

## **Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has a closed Facebook group which it encourages newly recruited international staff to use in the period between employment offer and starting at the trust. Read about this good practice in the International Recruitment Toolkit (page 43).

## **South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust**

South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust has developed a comprehensive welcome guide for its new international nurses, midwives and allied health professionals (AHPs). The guide signposts to people who can help within the trust including practice education and occupational health. It also includes information on local places of worship, things to do in the local area, images of UK currency and tips on the local dialect.

## **Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System**

Through effective ICS working, Surrey Heartlands identified that affordable accommodation was one of the key barriers to access for international nurses and launched a pilot project in July 2022 using an online platform designed to improve access of international nurses to affordable accommodation. Staff at Surrey Heartlands can advertise spare rooms available for rent in their property, with room prices capped below the area average to ensure affordability. As of February 2023, the pilot has provided affordable accommodation for 112 nights and continues to grow. The next phase of the project is to launch a free mobile app designed to increase the access of international nurses in Surrey Heartlands to pastoral, bespoke coaching, mentoring, mental and psychological support, signposting to affordable accommodations and services and information to support integration and improve personal sense of belonging in the workplace.

## Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust

Royal United Hospitals Bath has created a managers guide to supporting international nurses. This guide enables the team members of each ward to understand the journey and role of international nurses joining the team. This also gives junior and senior sisters a brief summary of the clinical support, OSCE programme, and other relevant information needed to help international nurses.

## Tools and further reading

- This NHS Employers Working and Training in the NHS Guide can be shared with international medical graduates (IMGs) as part of your recruitment and induction material.
- See Health Education England's (HEE's) tools to support managers with onboarding international AHPs and NHS Employers page for useful resources to support international AHPs.
- This NHS Employers page provides a collection of national resources and guidance to support your international nurses and midwives.
- The overseas nurses and midwife recruitment section of the International Recruitment Toolkit has further information on UK professional registration requirements (page 58).
- UK ENIC (European Network of Information Centres) is the designated national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. HEE's National Talent For Care team has fully-funded access to the ENIC database and offer an equivalency verification service for overseas qualifications, contact [ENIC@hee.nhs.uk](mailto:ENIC@hee.nhs.uk) to access this service.
- For information on the registration process and associated timescales of the relevant professional regulator see the International Recruitment Toolkit (page 23).

- For further information on repayment clauses should your international recruits decide to leave employment early, please see the International Recruitment Toolkit (page 19).

## How will you play your part?

Reflect on what you have read and consider how you or your team will play your part.

I/we will...