

Pillar two: Making new recruits feel welcome

The second pillar is about ensuring new recruits feel welcome when they arrive by helping them settle into their new communities and pointing them towards local services.

Consider what they will need during their first few months in the UK to establish themselves to live, work and beyond, such as bank accounts, national insurance numbers, registering with a GP, somewhere to live, UK sim cards, access to shopping, schools, navigating public transport and other amenities. Helping them with these arrangements will make a big difference to how well they ease into life in the UK. Introducing some coordinated social activities can also prove very helpful in encouraging integration into teams.

This supportive approach during the recruitment and onboarding stages means you are more likely to retain staff.

How to make new recruits feel welcome



For international staff

Pastoral support

It is important to provide pastoral care for your overseas staff as soon as they arrive to support them as they adjust to a new culture. You should continue this offer as they move beyond their initial induction period. As part of your pastoral care, check in with colleagues and offer them a wellbeing conversation to explore how they are feeling. Your existing international staff are often best placed to provide this support as they know first-hand how hard it can be to adjust to living in a new country. You should also build relationships with local community groups and share details with new recruits to enable them to build social support networks outside of work. Continue to signpost your new recruits to diaspora groups to supplement your current support offer. A full list of diaspora groups can be found in the International Recruitment Toolkit. Your staff networks can also provide a safe space for your international staff to share ideas, raise awareness of challenges and provide support. A detailed checklist to assess your pastoral offer can be found in the International Recruitment Toolkit as well as further tips, good practice examples and a checklist for more pastoral support ideas.

Buddying

A buddy can help build relationships between your new international staff and existing staff and help them to feel more settled. Existing staff with

lived experience of relocating to the UK could become a buddy for a new overseas recruit. Your local trade union representatives may also be able to help set up peer networks in the workplace.

Induction

Your organisation may already have a well-established corporate induction programme, but it is worth considering what additional support or information might be beneficial for your new international staff. For example, introducing a programme of social adaptation will help your overseas staff to learn about the NHS and the cultural and working differences. A programme like this will also enhance English language levels, particularly in areas such as typical local dialect and phrases. You could also consider designing a bespoke induction programme based on country of origin, such as a comparison of commonly used medications in home countries. Other support offers can include role preparation, for example supernumerary time or OSCE preparation. It is also important to familiarise new international recruits with HR processes bespoke to working in England and the NHS and to share information on pay, terms and conditions and contracts.

Consider incorporating the induction support available from professional regulators, professional associations and trade unions such as the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), British Medical Association (BMA), the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, the Royal College of Occupational Therapy, the British Dietetic Association, UNISON, and Unite, and via the Occupational English Test (OET). The General Medical Council (GMC) runs a free workshop for overseas-trained doctors designed to help them settle into medical careers in the UK (see tools and further reading below for more information).

Integration

For leaders, managers and the wider workforce

Welcome event

Many organisations hold welcome events or celebrations throughout the year to celebrate the arrival of new international colleagues or to congratulate individuals or groups who have passed their OSCE for example. You may wish to consider working in collaboration as a system to organise events, which would allow for sharing of resources but also would introduce internationally recruited staff across organisations. Including existing international staff, ward or department teams, local faith leaders and senior leaders can help them to feel included, welcomed and supported in your organisation. Your communications team can also get involved in sharing the good news of international staff through internal news stories or newsletters, although it is important to be aware of the Code of Practice red and amber list of countries.

Health and wellbeing offer

As part of your induction, signpost new recruits to the health and wellbeing offer provided by your trust and/or system and encourage completion of an associated occupational health assessment or risk assessment where required. You should signpost and encourage new recruits to seek support when needed and offer advice on how to do so. You can also encourage them to make links with professional and

personal networks and diaspora groups to support their wellbeing and create friendships and peer networks.

Many NHS organisations have introduced networks of health and wellbeing champions to support the health and wellbeing of colleagues across the organisation. NHS Employers' health and wellbeing champions webpage has guidance for health and wellbeing leads on what they need to do to introduce wellbeing champions as part of the NHS People Plan. Link with your local HR and OD teams to find out how champions have been introduced, and how you can signpost recruits to access the champions network, an online community of practice, accessible through the NHS Futures site. If you're managing a team, NHS England's Looking after your team health and wellbeing guide can help you identify how to best support your team and identify areas of need.

Flexible working

Line managers are encouraged to discuss flexible working with direct reports during your regular health and wellbeing conversations, appraisals, or via one-to-one discussions. The NHS Staff Council has worked collaboratively with NHS England and Timewise to develop two new guides to support NHS line managers and staff to work more flexibly.

Robust induction and manager support

Good practice examples

University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust

The University Hospitals of Derby and Burton has developed a robust induction plan for internationally educated nurses with two bespoke inductions, one as they arrive in the country and another after they have undertaken their OSCE test. Additional sessions have been included in both inductions based on what nurses have previously found challenging as they integrate into the clinical areas. Additional sessions are:

- introduction to the UK culture
- fundamentals of care (in recognition of the potential differences in how nursing is practiced in international nurses' home countries and to ensure that they feel equipped in delivering patient care)
- accountability and delegation.

A new learning approach called nesting has also been introduced. Nesting is a facilitated learning experience and a way of introducing the internationally educated nurses to the clinical area during their supernumerary period by briefly placing them in a nesting ward. It focuses on two main activities: observations and reflections, under the overall guidance of a facilitator. Nesting promotes learning, collaboration, and effective partnerships to different clinical areas in supporting and nurturing new staff. A simulation has also been included in the trust's second induction programme to provide opportunities for internationally educated nurses to establish their confidence in escalation and handover before they are allocated shifts as a registered practitioner.

Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust's (FHFT) bespoke peer to peer buddy scheme, Frim Buds pairs newly arrived international nurses with more experienced international nurses for guidance, advice and socialisation. A software called Padlet is used to publish details of Frim Bud's volunteers with the aim of easy accessibility, enhancing transition while in bootcamp training, providing non-clinical support, fostering social

inclusion and building wider community. Newly arrived colleagues have fed back that they were able to adjust smoothly, expand their social circle in a new environment, enabling opportunities to connect to other colleagues and access valuable information and support. Senior or experienced internationally educated nurses were also able to develop their leadership and interpersonal skills with opportunities to share knowledge and experience. This programme reflects FHFT's nursing and midwifery strategy values: support, develop and achieve.

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospital NHS Trust

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospital NHS Trust has partnered with a local charity providing services to the community. Through its community volunteer buddy scheme, the charity and the trust work together to provide one-to-one support to their international nurses. A nurse buddy helps international nurses to get to know the local area, find local services, day trips, and offer support and guidance. Before joining the trust, international nurses are asked whether they would like a buddy (via a brief questionnaire) and then the trust works with the charity to pair them up with one. The nurse buddy will contact the new recruit once a week in a way that best suits both parties. The trust received NHS England's Pastoral Care Quality Award in 2022 for the quality of care and support provided for international nurses and midwives joining the trust.

Norfolk and Norwich University NHS Trust

Norfolk and Norwich University NHS Trust has an international recruitment buddy network. All buddies are volunteer international nurses who have obtained their NMC registration. New international nurses joining the trust receive information on the buddy network in their welcome packs. The network is supported by the professional nurse advocate team and Freedom to Speak Up Guardians. Volunteer buddies are notified of international nurse arrival dates and new nurses' details are exchanged. The buddies will email the new nurses to welcome them to the trust and may also meet them at the airport when they arrive, at their accommodation or at their induction. The trust was awarded NHS

England's Pastoral Care Quality Award in 2022 in recognition of the quality of pastoral care it provides to internationally recruited nurses and midwives.

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

In 2022 Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust established an international medical graduate (IMG) office to coordinate the work of inducting and supporting IMGs. It revised the induction process so that every IMG, regardless of which directorate they join has the same experience. The induction covers a variety of key touch points starting from when an IMG is offered a role and sets out to give them as much information as possible from the outset.

- **First day kit:** the trust developed its first day kit for IMGs to provide information specific to the trust and local area. A link to the kit is sent to new IMGs before they start so they can familiarise themselves before they arrive.
- **Virtual meeting:** this is an opportunity for the IMG office to get to know the IMG on a personal level and what support they will need on arrival.
- **IMG buddy scheme:** directorates are asked to identify a buddy for new IMGs, preferably someone who is an IMG who can help with some of the practicalities of settling into the UK.
- **Induction day:** new IMGs attend a face-to-face induction day which includes a welcome to UK practice programme from a GMC representative.
- **Education supervisor:** each IMG is allocated an education supervisor that meets with them within their first two weeks to start career discussions.
- **WhatsApp:** a WhatsApp group offers an informal space for IMGs to get to know each other and build their network.

Tools and further reading

- NHS England's resource on combatting racial discrimination against minority ethnic nurses, midwives and nursing associates provides advice

on the action you can take if you witness or experience racism. It also supports those in leadership roles to be inclusive leaders.

- [The King's Fund](#) runs a free, short course to learn about the history of the NHS and how it all works and fits together.
- [OET](#) has the [Living the Language](#) resource to help new recruits overcome common communication challenges.
- This [guidance document](#) sets out minimum standards and detailed guidance for employers to provide an effective induction for IMGs entering the NHS. Access further information and resources on the [NHS Induction Programme](#).
- [The GMC](#) runs a free workshop for overseas-trained doctors designed to help them settle into medical careers in the UK.
- The [Health and Care Professions Council](#), the regulator for AHPs, provides information for internally trained clinicians wanting to join the UK register.
- The [BMA](#) has a guide to working in the UK for internationally educated doctors, including information about how the NHS works.
- Consider how working with groups such as the [Academy of Medical Royal Colleges](#), can support international doctors should they choose to join as members.
- See NHS Employers' [quick guide](#) to support your understanding of the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Health and Social Care Personnel.
- [NHS England's national preceptorship framework for nursing](#) sets national standards for preceptorship for nurses and establishes good practice. Further information and resources are available on the [NHS Employers preceptorship page](#).
- [NHS England's allied health professional \(AHP\) preceptorship standards and framework](#). This resource aligns with the Health and Care Professions Council's (HCPC's) [principles for preceptorship](#). The [NHS Pastoral Care Quality Award](#) is a scheme that supports NHS trusts to provide high-quality pastoral care to internationally educated nurses and midwives.
- NHS Employers' [health and wellbeing hub](#) provides advice and guidance on stress, sickness absence and financial wellbeing for NHS provider organisations. The [health and wellbeing network](#) is free to join and enables health and wellbeing leads to connect, share good practice and find out what's happening across NHS wellbeing.

- NHS England has a number of health and wellbeing programmes for NHS staff, to support a range of health and wellbeing needs.
 - See the International Recruitment Toolkit for information on:
 - considerations if you are employing refugee healthcare professionals
 - language support to prepare overseas recruits for their English language tests, and watch this NHS Employers webinar for more ideas.
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English Language Testing and OET webinar

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...