

**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 by 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, GPs, somewhere to live, UK sim cards, access to shopping, schools, 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, and for this reason, we have included this information in this toolkit and the International Recruitment Toolkit.

## 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. 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 a support network outside of work.

The International Recruitment Toolkit contains further tips, good practice examples and a checklist for more pastoral support ideas (pages 47-49).

A detailed checklist to assess your pastoral offer can be found in the International Recruitment Toolkit (page 62).

## **Preceptorships**

Nurses newly joining the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) register having trained overseas need training and support.

You should consider your existing preceptorship programmes and how these can be tailored to take into account their prior experience. The International Recruitment Toolkit shares an example from Whittington Health NHS Trust on how it developed a tailored preceptorship for its international nurses (page 72).

## **Social networks**

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 (page 73). Your staff networks can also provide a safe space for your international staff to share ideas, raise awareness of challenges and provide support.

## **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.

### **Integration visits**

Helping your overseas staff to find their way around the local community is a good way of familiarising them with their surroundings. This could include taking them to local parks and supermarkets, the post office, tourist attractions, GPs, schools, helping them use public transport, and showing them the local places of worship.

### **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 on areas such as typical ward 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.

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), 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).

### **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. 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. Consider working in collaboration as a system to organise events.

### **Health and wellbeing offer**

As part of your induction, include an introduction to the health and wellbeing offer provided by your trust and associated occupational health assessment or risk assessment.

### **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.

## **Good practice examples**

### **University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust**

University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust has a robust induction and onboarding offer. New international nurses receive dedicated support from existing international nurses who ensure the nurses comfortably adjust to their new environment. Read the full case study to find out more.

### **West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust**

West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals 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, via a buddy system. Nurse buddies help international nurses to become familiarised

with the local area, find local services, day trips, and offer support and guidance. Prior to 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 also 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 also awarded NHS England's Pastoral Care Quality Award in 2022 in recognition of the quality of pastoral care it provides to its 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

- 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 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.
- NHS England has established a national preceptorship framework for nursing which includes a core set of standards that constitute a minimum requirement for preceptorship programmes.
- 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 England has developed a number of bespoke support offers for diverse NHS staff, find more information on the NHS England website.
- See the International Recruitment Toolkit for information on:
  - considerations if you are employing refugee healthcare professionals (page 22)
  - language support to prepare overseas recruits for their English language tests (page 40) and watch this NHS Employers webinar below for more ideas.

## How will you play your part?



