

# Best Practice for International Recruitment in Social Care: North Central London Councils' Partnership

## Introduction:

Recruiting international staff into social care settings in the UK requires a thoughtful and systematic approach to ensure compliance with regulations, cultural sensitivity, and the delivery of high-quality care. This document outlines best practices to:

1. guide the recruitment process and
2. aid the process of settling into life in NCL and supporting newly arrived staff.

This should be considered alongside the code of practice set out by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) [Code of practice for the international recruitment of health and social care personnel in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612222/code_of_practice_for_the_international_recruitment_of_health_and_social_care_personnel_in_england.pdf).

This document has been developed based on feedback by care providers that they want to understand and develop best practice in what is still a new area for the sector. It is intended to be practical and deliverable. All examples within it are based on practice that some care providers in north central London are already using. We thank care providers for sharing their current practice to help develop this document.

The document does not intend to specify how providers obtain a license as this process is set out elsewhere, nor does it try to evaluate whether International Recruitment is the right solution for individual providers, as each provider will need to do this directly.

## Pastoral Support

The pastoral support element that is provided to the overseas member of staff throughout the recruitment journey and beyond is an essential one. It should build on provider's existing onboarding processes, but will need to be enhanced given the different context that international recruits face when arriving in the UK. Whilst organisations may differ in the specific details of the pastoral support they can provide, each organisation should offer some form of:

- Accommodation support (deposit and first month's rent)
- Practical support (sim cards, bank accounts, where to buy food, advice on how to access the NHS and other local services etc.)
- Travel support ('oyster card', how to use TFL services)
- Social/emotional support (this can include local area guides, 1-1 support, buddy system, mentorship programs, support to identify relevant community organisations)
- Salary advance (this is to support their cost of living during the first 1 or 2 months of working)
- Arrival pack (linen, bedding, pillows, toilet paper, crockery, milk, eggs, rice, noodles, bread, butter, coffee, tea).

## Cultural Competence and Sensitivity

Cultural Awareness Training should be provided to staff (either as part of the pastoral support offer or separately) in order to promote understanding of local customs and to enable a seamless integration. This training will include information about cultural nuances, equality and diversity, food preparation as well as the political landscape.

## Corporate induction

A thorough theoretical and practical induction to the organisation. The timing and structure to corporate induction will vary between organisations but the principle is that the overseas recruit will feel well informed and supported to integrate into the organisation during an agreed programme of induction and orientation.

International recruits will usually be experienced carers and nurses that have excellent existing skills, however, their previous experience will be of a different health and social care system and therefore some care giving will be out of line with UK good practice (and potentially regulations).

Therefore, the corporate induction will need to assess and identify areas where there is a training need around local expectations of care giving, which could be resolved through shadowing an experienced care worker for example. In addition, we expect employers to outline pay development opportunities and career progression as part of the induction.

## Language proficiency

- Assess the language proficiency of international candidates, ensuring effective communication with service users.
- Consider language support programs or language training for staff with language gaps – as part of the pastoral support they might need support with ESOL and other training courses.
- Consider having multiple language options available not just English.

## Pre-arrival

Preparatory information material to support the overseas recruit in readiness for their arrival to the UK will help reduce some of the anxiety associated with relocating and working in a new country. Organisations may differ in how to prepare the member of staff, a following list is recommended:

1. **A welcome letter** to be sent prior to the arrival, setting the tone and giving making them feel welcomed and valued by the organisation. It could include things like what great benefits they will be getting by working as an employee of the organisation.
2. **A welcome pack**, included with the welcome letter. The NHS have found that sending it before arrival to the UK has significant benefits for orientation, as it has encouraged overseas nurses to research the organisation and the local area beforehand, which in turn reduced anxieties on arrival, so this is something we can learn from them.

The welcome pack could include a guide to local area, signposting to community centres, 1-1 support, what they will be getting help with, what to bring, what to do to prepare in advance etc. We're currently developing a welcome pack with our pastoral support service, PJ's, and will share this with provider asap.