



Royal College
of Nursing

Internationally recruited nurses

RCN guidance for RCN representatives, UK employers
and nursing staff considering work in the UK





This publication is due for review in April 2019. To provide feedback on its contents or on your experience of using the publication, please email publications.feedback@rcn.org.uk

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Introduction

This RCN guidance is aimed at nursing staff and health care assistants (HCAs) who want to work in the UK, as well as their potential employers. It offers an overview of the key considerations and principles for ensuring the ethical recruitment and employment of members of the nursing community from outside the UK.

In addition, this publication offers signposting to information resources where nurses, HCAs, employers and RCN officers can access more comprehensive advice. As the law can change quite frequently in this area, it is advised that this guidance is read in conjunction with the most up-to-date legislation as well as the RCN's position statement on International Recruitment found at www.rcn.org.uk/support/policy/policy_briefings/2015-briefings

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About the RCN

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has more than 420,000 members and is the largest professional union of nursing staff and students in the world. It is a leading international voice in nursing and has a long and proud history of dealing with international nursing issues.

The RCN offers an immigration advice service to assist non-UK nationals with advice on living and working in the UK. It also works closely with nursing organisations in other countries and with a number of key international health and nursing alliances, through its Policy and International Department, to promote policies, legislation and sharing of good practice at EU and international level to support and improve nursing.

The RCN provides members with professional, practical and personal support, and helps nurses make the most of their careers through its UK-wide network of local workplace representatives. RCN stewards assist with employment matters, safety representatives assist with health and safety matters, and learning representatives provide support on professional development issues. Careers advisers, welfare rights advisers and counsellors are all available to assist with integration into UK life. Members can contact any of these representatives for advice and support.

Please see RCN support and useful contacts on [pages 19-20](#).

The RCN:

- has more than 1,700 workplace representatives who offer support in the planning and management of your learning, ensure health and safety requirements are complied with and your terms and conditions are the best they can be
- has one of the largest specialist nursing libraries in Europe
- is committed to campaigning and lobbying to bring about real improvements in the lives of nurses and HCAs – improving studying, working conditions and training opportunities.

See www.rcn.org.uk/membership/nurse_member

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Immigration

In order to work in the UK, you must ensure that you have the correct permission to do so. The law relating to European Economic Area nationals (EEA) and non-European Economic Area nationals (non-EEA) vary.

EEA nationals

If you are a national of a country within the EEA area you are entitled to work in the UK without requiring a visa to do so. The Immigration (EEA) Regulations 2006 state that an EEA national may reside and work in the UK, so long as they are a 'qualified person'. This is often referred to as a qualified person 'exercising their treaty right'.

A qualified person must be one of the following:

1. job seeker
2. worker
3. self-employed person
4. self-sufficient person
5. student.

Students and self-sufficient persons must also obtain comprehensive sickness insurance (CSI) once they arrive in the UK. National insurance contributions do not count as CSI.

As long as an EEA national nurse is working in the UK, they are entitled to remain in the UK legally.

Can an EEA national settle permanently in the UK?

Regulation 15 of the Immigration (EEA) Regulations 2016 states that so long as you have remained in the UK for five complete years as a qualified person (for example, as a worker) you will acquire the right to permanent residence. This means that after working in the UK for a period of five years an EEA national nurse can settle in the UK permanently.

Does a nurse need to obtain confirmation of their right to work?

As an EEA national, it is not necessary to obtain confirmation of the right to work. Although not necessary, we would encourage you to obtain confirmation of your rights from the Home Office. This is to ensure that your status in the UK can be easily confirmed and will assist in the event that evidence is ever needed.

In order to obtain confirmation of the right to work in the UK on this basis, application form EEA (QP) can be submitted to the Home Office for a registration certificate.

See www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330213/EEA_1_Registration_Certificate_06-14.pdf

In order to obtain confirmation of the right to reside in the UK permanently, application form EEA3 can be submitted to the Home Office.

See www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/314858/EEA_3_Permanent_Residence_06-14.pdf

Can family members of an EEA national also reside in the UK?

Under the Immigration (EEA) Regulations 2006, direct family members have a right to reside in the UK whilst the EEA nurse remains a qualified person.

Confirmation of this right can also be obtained from the Home Office.

Non-EEA nationals

If you are a national of a country outside of the EEA you must obtain a visa to work in the UK, prior to your arrival in the UK. In order to work as a nurse you will need to apply for a Tier 2 visa. In order to do so, you must:

- have a certificate of sponsorship reference number. This reference number holds information about the job and your personal details. The certificate is not actually a piece of paper, but merely a number which is given to the nurse by their sponsor. The sponsor must also confirm the details of the position of employment
- have an appropriate salary – currently this is £20,500 or more (Home Office guidelines)
- be able to meet the English language requirement – currently level 7.0 on the IELTS test
- have £945 in savings - to prove you can support yourself. This must be in your bank account for 90 days before you apply. However, it is not necessary to have this amount in savings if your sponsor is fully approved (A-rated) and they have stated on your certificate of sponsorship that you will not claim benefits during your stay.

If you are married to a British national you should consider obtaining a spouse visa. If you are a non-EEA nurse already in the UK, the visa required may be different. Please contact the RCN Immigration Advice Service for specific advice.

The Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE)

From 6 April 2017, nurses and midwives applying to register with the NMC will have the opportunity to sit an OSCE a third time if they need to. They will now only have to wait three months, and not six months to undertake this third sitting. This will enable pre-registration nurses residing in the UK under a Tier 2 visa to pass the OSCE within the eight months time limit granted by their visa to successfully complete the exam.

How long does a Tier 2 visa last?

The Tier 2 visa is granted for a maximum of three years. So long as the sponsor still requires the nurse in the position of employment, an application to extend the Tier 2 visa should be made. It is important to note that a Tier 2 visa will not be extended beyond the six-year period.

Can a non-EEA national settle permanently in the UK?

The immigration rules have recently been amended. If you came to the UK after 6 April 2011 on a Tier 2 visa you can obtain indefinite leave to remain (permanent settlement status) if the following requirements are satisfied. You must:

- hold a Tier 2 (general) visa
- have been living and working in the UK for five years and spent no more than 180 days outside the UK in any 12 month period ('continuous residence')
- still be required in your position of employment by the employer (sponsor)
- be paid an annual salary of £35,000 or more. This salary threshold requirement will not be applicable if the job falls within the shortage occupation list.

Can family members of a non-EEA national also reside in the UK?

Your direct family members, spouse and children under the age of 18, can also come to the UK as dependants upon the Tier 2 visa. The application must be made online from your country of residence.

See www.gov.uk/apply-uk-visa

You must demonstrate that your dependants can be supported while they are in the UK. Each dependant must have £630 available to them. This is in addition to the £945 required for your own application. The funds must be evidenced by bank statements and must have been in the bank account for at least 90 days before the application is made.

Can a nurse on a Tier 2 visa be promoted or change jobs?

Yes, however, you must apply to extend the Tier 2 visa if:

- you wish to change your job and the new job is with a different employer
- the job changes to a different standard occupation classification (SOC) code
- the job is taken off the shortage occupation list
- the change of job means the salary is less than the amount stated on the certificate of sponsorship.

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You must have a new certificate of sponsorship and must meet all other application conditions. It is essential that you continue working for your previous sponsor until the start date on the new certificate of sponsorship.

In the event that you remain with your current employer but the job changes in other ways, for example the pay increases, no extension of the Tier 2 visa is required.

Regulation of nurses in the UK

All nurses in the UK are regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC). All nurses must register with the NMC before they can begin working.

How does a nurse register with the NMC?

Applications to register with the NMC are made to its Overseas Department. The minimum requirement for admission to the register is that you must be a registered nurse or midwife in your home country.

However, not all overseas qualifications are automatically recognised by the NMC. Applications are assessed according to whether or not your education, training and experience equips you to carry out the duties of a registered nurse or registered midwife in the UK.

Therefore, you have to provide details of your theoretical, clinical pre-registration education and training, and post-registration education and practice.

What are the requirements to register with the NMC?

EEA nationals

You will need to make an application to the NMC. Your application will then be assessed as to whether it meets the requirements for automatic recognition or acquired rights. The NMC assesses your training programme directly against the relevant UK educational requirements. To do this they will need a complete transcript of your training, which must show the number of hours of theoretical and clinical study, and number of deliveries if you are a midwife.

See www.nmc-uk.org/Registration/Joining-the-register/Trained-in-the-EU-or-EEA

Non-EEA nationals

All EEA and non-EEA national nurses must confirm they meet the NMC's minimum requirements which include the following:

- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) 7.0 (academic version) or above in all sections
- successful completion of a three-year (or equivalent) undergraduate education and training programme, which must include a practical component
- 12 months post-registration practice experience
- a self-declaration that they are of good health and good character.

Registration

To maintain registration with the NMC you need to declare you have:

- completed 450 hours of registered practice in the previous three years
- completed 35 hours of learning activity (continuing professional development) in the previous three years
- an indemnity arrangement.

There can be delays when registering with the NMC and there is a fee. The up-to-date costs are available at: www.nmc-uk.org/Registration/Joining-the-register

What is the application process?

Eligibility

You must complete a self-assessment of your eligibility to apply prior to beginning the application process. You must declare that you meet all of the minimum requirements including good health and good character. Supporting evidence for the declarations must be submitted during the assessment process.

Test of competence – part one

Once you have passed the eligibility assessment, you will be asked to sit the first part of the test of competence. This is a computer-based test of theoretical practice-based knowledge. The test format will be multiple choice questions and can be taken in test centres around the world. The test can be attempted twice. If you fail both attempts, you must wait six months before trying again.

Assessment

In order to be assessed you must provide the following:

- valid passport
- birth certificate
- a qualification certificate for each qualification being submitted as part of the application
- registration certificates for each area where you have registered previously
- two employment references confirming post-registration practice of at least 12 months, competence and character
- verifications from all jurisdictions where you practised or had been previously registered
- transcript of training for all relevant nursing programmes completed.
- a good health declaration from your general practitioner or the occupational health department at your place of work
- a police clearance certificate from all countries where you have lived since the age of 18.

All of the relevant forms are available from the NMC website. Part one and the assessment is completed in your country of residence.

Once part one and the assessment have been completed you can apply for a visa to come into the UK to complete part two of the test of competence. You will need a Certificate of Sponsorship to enter the UK in this capacity.

Test of competence – part two

This assesses a nurse's clinical knowledge. The test is an objective-structured clinical examination (OSCE)

and can only be completed in the UK. You will need to contact the University of Northampton directly to book and pay for their test.

ID check

After completing part two of the test of competence, you will have a face-to-face ID check with the NMC.

Final registration

Once the above stages have been completed successfully, you will be invited to submit your final declaration and payment for registration online. Once both have been received, the NMC will send you their registration number (Pin).

How do I remain on the NMC register?

Whilst in the UK

Currently nurses must undertake 450 hours of practice and 35 hours of continuing professional development every three years in order to remain on the register.

See www.nmc-uk.org/Registration/Staying-on-the-register/Meeting-the-Prep-standards

Revalidation is soon to be introduced by the NMC. All nurses will need to meet the requirements of the new model which is currently being piloted, to ensure they are fit to practise throughout their career. Revalidation will introduce new requirements which will replace the existing PREP requirements. Please keep up to date with these changes.

If I leave the UK

Registration doesn't have to lapse when you leave the UK as long as you can meet the post-registration ongoing education and practice (PREP) and continuing professional development (CPD) requirements through registered practice in your home country. If you do not meet these requirements you must make an application to be readmitted onto the register.

How do I get readmitted onto the NMC register?

You must request a standard readmission pack from the NMC. As part of this application it is necessary to declare compliance with the PREP standards: 750 hours of registered practice in the previous five years and 35 hours of learning activity in the previous three years. The hours spent practising as a registered nurse outside of the UK can be used to meet the PREP requirements.

The NMC defines practising as working in some capacity by virtue of registration as a nurse, midwife or specialist community public health nurse. Practice can include administrative, supervisory, teaching, research and managerial roles as well as providing direct patient care.

The 35 hours of learning activity can encompass a wide variety of things such as courses, seminars, online courses and other self learning, whether this is with or without effective registration. This must be relevant to the qualification and the practice intended to be undertaken in the future.

Nurses are required to complete/provide the following:

- Notification of Practice (NoP) form, declaring compliance with the PREP standards
- one reference of good health and good character (this will be a verification letter from the overseas nursing board)
- two other references of good character
- application form
- registration fee.

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Good employment practice

It is essential employers adopt good employment practices and ensure a skilled and committed workforce is retained. This section looks at best practice relating to job offers and employment contracts for nurses and HCAs.

Fair recruitment and selection

Employers must not discriminate against potential job applicants in any way or at any time during the recruitment and selection process. For example, this means that job adverts must not ask for youthful or mature candidates and they must not state a preference for UK training over qualifications gained elsewhere.

Many employers use agencies to recruit nursing staff from overseas, usually to address problematic vacancy rates and a lack of available UK trained staff/recruits. Again, these agencies must not discriminate against applicants. These agencies may charge fees for their services.

Job offers

If you are offered a job it may be subject to references. This means that no contract of employment exists until references are obtained and the offer is confirmed. Your potential employer will want to be satisfied that the references supplied are suitable and confirm you as being able to do the job. If they are not, the employer can withdraw their offer of employment. If a post is offered unconditionally and then withdrawn, you may have a legitimate claim for a breach of contract and should take advice immediately.

Pre-employment health assessment

An employer should not ask health-related questions until you have been offered a job or been included in a successful pool of candidates to be offered a job when one becomes available.

There is a limited range of circumstances in which an employer is entitled to ask questions about health before offering an applicant a job or including an applicant in a pool for selection and primarily this relates to establishing if an applicant can comply with the requirement to undergo an assessment and whether there is any reasonable adjustment required in relation to that assessment or, establishing whether an applicant will be able to carry out a function which is essential to the work concerned.

After you have been offered a job or been included in a successful pool of candidates to be offered a job, your employer may ask you to take part in a pre-employment health assessment. The purpose of a pre-employment health assessment is to:

- assess your health and consider whether pre-existing health problems make you vulnerable to occupational illness, accident or disease
- plan a programme of care, if needed, that will protect you from harm and assess whether a pre-existing disease or condition, for example, an infectious disease or mental health problem, would pose a risk for vulnerable patients/clients
- determine whether reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 are required to support you if you have a qualifying disability.

HIV testing

Current guidance, issued in January 2014, recognises that the risk of transmission from health care worker to patient is very low, and has modified the earlier position where nurses who were HIV positive were restricted in the work they could undertake. The RCN believes that it is inappropriate to target this group for testing unless all applicants, including those from the UK, are also tested. If you are asked to take an HIV test you must give consent (before you are tested) both to the test and to the results being given to your employer. Pre- and post-test counselling must be provided.

Employment contracts

Employment contracts can be written or unwritten, and in either case they are enforceable on both sides (by both you and your employer).

A good employer will give you a written contract to sign before you start work. If they don't, you can write to them to request one and they must send it within two months. Don't worry if you have started work before this time but do make sure that you have discussed and understand all the terms and conditions of your employment before you start.

All your contractual terms should be reasonable and legal. Both you and your employer must act in accordance with the contract, within the law and without discrimination. The RCN is aware that some employers have included unreasonable or unlawful additional statements to some contracts. These have included charges made for accommodation, training and education, and to cover any costs should you resign.

Regrettably, the RCN has evidence that some employers also seek to include legally unenforceable penalty clauses in contracts of employment, sometimes combined with unethical threats such as deportation if you were to leave, whatever the reason. The RCN deplores this practice and will seek to challenge it when appropriate.

Also, you should never be asked to hand over your passport or other official documentation. No employer has the legal right to retain a passport. Passports are the property of the issuing government and you must, as a citizen of that country, keep your passport safe in your possession throughout your employment.

Discrimination

As a migrant nurse, there shouldn't be anything that leads to you being treated differently because of your racial or ethnic background, nationality or national origin – such discrimination is illegal. As is any discrimination as a result of trade union membership or activities, age, disability (or assumptions about disability), gender reassignment, marriage and civil

partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

There are similar protections against discrimination in Northern Ireland. To find out more contact the Northern Ireland Equality Commission www.equalityni.org/Home

Employment particulars

In addition to a written contract, a good employer will also provide you with a written statement of employment particulars when a job offer is made. This document isn't an employment contract but will cover the main conditions of employment and should include the following:

- name of the employer and employee
- date employment started and period of continuous employment
- scale and rate of pay, how often an employee will receive pay and how it will be calculated
- terms and conditions – hours of work and holiday entitlement (including public holidays)
- if overtime is a requirement of the job
- job title and description
- place of work.

As well as the principal statement, a written statement must also contain information about:

- how long a temporary job is expected to last
- the end date of a fixed-term contract
- the notice period
- the collective agreement
- the pension
- who to go to with any grievance
- how to complain about how a grievance is handled
- how to complain about a disciplinary or dismissal decision.

Information about other employment arrangements, such as sick pay and procedures, disciplinary and dismissal procedures and grievance procedures, can be included or provided elsewhere, for example, in a staff handbook or on a staff website.

Unwritten terms

Occasionally employers ask staff to agree to unwritten terms that are not stated in the employment contract, for example to change shifts without notice or to undertake domestic as well as nursing duties. If you are in any way unsure or uncertain about such a request you should contact RCN Direct for support and advice on 0345 772 6100.

Changing your contract

After you have started work your employer may wish to change your contract for a number of different reasons and some of these may be perfectly reasonable. However, the RCN is aware that employers sometimes offer a contract of employment and then later seek to substitute this with another contract containing lesser terms and conditions – a practice the RCN deplores. If alternative contracts are offered, the RCN strongly advises members to contact RCN Direct for information and advice.

You are under no obligation to accept the new contract, but should you sign it or agree to it verbally, then the courts usually judge that the employee has agreed to the change. If you refuse to accept a new contract, your employer may terminate the original contract and you could find yourself out of work. This may have an impact on your immigration status. Do seek advice quickly if this happens as you may be able to take a legal claim if the dismissal is unfair, and/or you have been discriminated against. Unfair dismissal claims can only be taken if you already have two years' service with that employer. There are strict time limits for legal claims, so RCN members should take advice and seek support at the earliest opportunity.

If you have any concerns about your employer's behaviour call RCN Direct as soon as possible for advice and support. They may be able to help you over the phone or will refer you to your local RCN office if necessary.

Resigning or being dismissed

You must seek advice and be clear about the impact on your immigration status if you resign from or are dismissed from your post.

If you believe you have been mistreated by your employer, and that your dismissal is unfair, the RCN may be able to support you in taking a legal case to challenge your dismissal. However, this may not result in your reinstatement, so again, you will need to be very clear about the impact on your immigration status.

A supportive employer

The RCN believes that when nursing staff are treated well they give their very best care and attention to patients and clients. A good, healthy workplace is one that implements good business practice and is a place where staff feel supported and:

- have access to fair employment policies and practice – including sick leave, maternity and flexible work
- are treated with dignity and respect at work
- can work free from discrimination, bullying and harassment
- are protected from violence
- enjoy safe working environments
- receive fair pay and rewards
- have access to continuous learning and development.

RCN Direct and the RCN website have lots of information about these topics that will help you understand what you can expect at work and what to do if you have any concerns or problems.

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Living in the UK

On arrival – the induction

The RCN encourages all employers to offer a full and comprehensive induction to non-UK staff when they commence work in the UK. A good induction should ensure that you understand what is required of you at work and should include your employer's expectations, as well as how to live happily in the UK. The RCN offers a good practice guide to induction available on the RCN website.

Finding a home

The Immigration Act 2014 states that landlords have a duty to check a person's immigration status. A landlord may be fined up to £3,000 per adult if they cannot provide evidence that their tenant is legally in the UK. Therefore, you may be asked to provide such evidence in order to enter into a tenancy agreement. Your landlord may use the Home Office checking service to check if you are legally in the UK. If you wish to have proof of your status to provide to your landlord, the RCN can supply this to members. A fact sheet is available at: www.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/596830/Tenancy_Agreements_1.pdf

Opening a bank account

In accordance with the Immigration Act 2014, every bank or building society must carry out a status check to identify whether a person is 'disqualified' through a specific anti-fraud organisation or data-matching authority. Therefore, to open a UK bank account, you must provide evidence that you are legally in the UK. See *Money matters* on page 15 for more information. A fact sheet is also available at: www.rcn.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/600220/Immigration_and_Bank_Accounts.pdf

Discovering your area

Many areas in the UK have tourist information offices which offer details on accommodation, tourist attractions, restaurants and entertainment in your area. You should also access your local council website as you will find specific information about council services in your area, such as the day on which your rubbish bin is emptied, as well as information on local schools.

Your place of work should be able to direct you to the most useful places to obtain the necessary information to settle quickly into your local area.

Staying in contact with family and friends outside the UK

Most mobile operators will work automatically in roaming, but this can be very expensive. If you search the different networks, you can find good deals with top up cards (pay-as-you-go), or contracts, to call home with reduced prices. You also can check the most common networks used around UK.

www.three.com

www.orange.co.uk

www.vodafone.co.uk

www.o2.co.uk

Regarding internet, there are various providers. You should research your options and compare offers for your location. To have the internet installed, you must schedule an appointment with the company and an engineer will call to your house. The internet can take from two days to three weeks to be installed.

Some of most popular providers of internet and telephone are:

www.bt.com

www.sky.com

www.talktalk.co.uk

www.virginmedia.com

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Money matters

Income tax

When you start earning you will have to pay income tax if you earn more than a specified personal allowance in any tax year (a tax year usually runs from April to April).

Your personal allowance varies depending on your circumstances. Your tax will usually be taken from your wages by your employer and passed to the revenue service. The amount of tax you pay will show on your payslip.

If you work as a nurse or HCA, you can apply to have the amount of tax you pay reduced; this is referred to as tax relief. You can claim tax relief on your NMC registration fees, your RCN subscription fees and on some of the costs of your uniform. When you join the RCN, you will be sent a claim form which you can then send to the tax office.

You can find out more about personal allowances and income tax rates at the HMRC website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/rates-and-allowances-income-tax/rates-and-allowances-income-tax

National Insurance

Both employees and employers pay National Insurance contributions. These contributions help to fund contributory benefits, such as the state pension, and certain benefits that you might be able to claim if you are unable to work.

National Insurance number

Your National Insurance number is a unique personal number which is used to record your National Insurance contributions. You do not need to have a number before starting work but you must obtain one when you get a job.

You need to make an appointment to apply for a National Insurance number (telephone 0845 600 0643). Check what documents you will need to bring to the appointment. You usually need to take your passport, payslips or a letter from your employer confirming that you will be working for them. Your appointment will take place at your nearest Jobcentre Plus office, or social security office in Northern Ireland.

Opening a bank account

There are many things to consider when opening a bank account in the UK, for example, does the bank have branches close to your home or place of work, and how easy will it be to transfer money from your bank account back home?

Immigration permission

Since 12 December 2014, banks and building societies have to make a status check on all new applicants for a current account. Banks and building societies must not open a current account for a person who requires immigration permission to be in the UK but who does not have it. You will be asked to provide proof of leave to remain in the UK. You may also need a letter from your employer stating that you are going to be working for them and proof of your UK address, for example, a rental agreement.

- Always let your bank/building society know in writing, as soon as possible, if you change your address or any other personal details.
- You may initially only be allowed to open a basic account but this will usually become a full account once you have had wages paid in for three to six months.
- Beware of high bank charges for going overdrawn. If you are struggling with your finances speak to the bank before going overdrawn or speak to the RCN Welfare Service.

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Benefits entitlement

Benefits are payments from the government to certain people on low incomes. It is vital that you check the terms of your leave to remain before applying for any UK benefits. A public fund restriction will prohibit you from claiming many benefits. However, there are certain benefits that are paid for by your National Insurance contributions that you may be able to claim if you have made enough contributions. The rules will also be different if your partner does not have a public fund restriction.

If you do have a public fund restriction speak to an RCN Welfare Adviser before making a claim to discuss whether you will qualify or if there are any implications for you claiming.

Career progression

Informal learning opportunities

The potential for individual development through informal learning opportunities is enormous.

Examples

Shadowing

Following nursing staff working in different practice fields can increase knowledge about the UK health sector and may help to plan future career development.

Secondment

Working in a different area, role or project, even just once a week, helps to obtain other skills, widen professional networks and undertake new responsibilities.

Acting up

Acting up is only acceptable in certain circumstances but it can be a useful experience and will help with motivation and development if a nurse is not yet ready for promotion to a more senior role.

Rotating practice

Moving through different practice areas on a four-to-six monthly basis can widen career opportunities.

Project work

Migrant nurses may have expertise in an area that is missing in the nursing team's skill mix. Sharing expertise through a project can bring in new ideas to improve patient care

Personal development plans

Migrant nurses and HCAs will be able to get the most out of work experience in the UK if introduced to personal development planning at an early stage, ideally in their adaptation or induction programme.

A personal development plan should include:

- specific learning objectives that can be measured

and achieved within a set timescale

- a date by which the objectives should be achieved, together with a review date
- an action plan for achieving the objectives and which includes the resources and support required to do this.

Migrant nurses should be encouraged to maintain a portfolio that includes the personal development plan together with their CV, any previous application forms, reflective diaries and records of continuing professional development activities.

Mentorship

Mentors can help newly recruited migrant nurses organise their personal development plans. To be effective, mentorship must be based on mutual respect, trust, confidentiality, agreed goals and achievement of results.

If the employer is an NHS organisation, the line manager should ensure that the nurse is aware of the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF) and the KSF outline for their post. For further information see www.rcn.org.uk/support/pay_and_conditions/agendaforchange

A mentor does not necessarily have to be in a management position – more importantly they need to have the skills required to help the newly recruited nurse to develop. There should be a system to change a mentor if the relationship is not working.

Clinical supervision

Every nurse needs the opportunity to evaluate and improve their contribution to patient care through clinical supervision on a one-to-one or group basis. Clinical supervision guidelines vary according to the type of organisation. Guidelines are available through the NMC.

Preceptorship

A preceptor is a more experienced nurse who works with a new nurse on a regular basis, providing guidance and support. Preceptorship is particularly helpful for migrant nurses, newly registered nurses, or nurses returning to practice or moving to a new field of practice. The preceptor and the individual nurse agree between them how the relationship will work in practice.

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RCN support

The RCN is here to support and assist you to be the best you can be.

RCN Immigration Advice Service

The RCN Immigration Advice Service provides free and confidential immigration advice and representation services to overseas nurses, nursing students and HCAs. It offers legal advice from solicitors and advisers with extensive experience. If you are in the UK on a Tier 2 visa, a spouse visa or other permission we can assist with applications to extend your leave.

Immigration law changes regularly and our staff are able to keep you fully informed of any changes relevant to you. There is no additional cost for using this service; it is included within the membership fee.

The RCN Immigration Advice Service can be contacted through RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100.

RCN support in the workplace

You might think that “RCN support” is only about help when you are in some kind of trouble at work. Certainly the RCN is there for you if that sort of situation arises. But support in the workplace comes in other forms, too.

For example, as well as all the work the RCN does around developing and promoting high standards of clinical care, on the trade union side of the College, there are RCN members who have been elected into positions locally to work on your behalf.

You may well have come across these accredited representatives or activists during your training but if not, here's what they do.

Stewards

RCN stewards represent you in your workplace. Trained and fully supported by the RCN, they promote

employment rights and ensure that members are treated fairly. Working in partnership with other unions and with employers, they aim to influence positive employment relations. They also prepare and present cases on behalf of members in situations where a dispute has arisen. Your steward can help you in many ways. For example, if you:

- feel discriminated against at work
- want to know more about your employment rights
- are concerned about poor working practices
- are injured at work.

To find out about your workplace steward either ask your colleagues or telephone RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100.

RCN Welfare Rights and Guidance Service

The RCN Welfare Rights and Guidance Service provides expert advice, guidance and information on the following issues:

- benefits, tax credits and pensions (this excludes financial or investment advice)
- retirement issues
- ill health and disability
- money advice and debt counselling
- housing problems
- career planning
- interview techniques
- CV and application form completion.

We also offer a Peer Support Service for ill and disabled RCN members. The Welfare Rights and Guidance Service can be contacted through RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100.

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Joining the RCN

For information about joining the RCN, telephone RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100 between 8.30am and 8.30pm, or write and request an application form from RCN Direct at Copse Walk, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff, CF23 8XG. You can also join online at www.rcn.org.uk/membership

Nursing students from overseas can join at a special rate of £10 per year for the duration of their programme (until they obtain their NMC PIN number and registration with the NMC), at which point a concessionary first year rate as a nurse will apply.

The concessionary first year rate applies to all those joining the RCN for the first time within one year of registering with the NMC for the first time. Please see the RCN website at www.rcn.org.uk or contact RCN Direct for the latest subscription rates for nurses, health care assistants and NMC registered nurses and midwives trained in the EEA and Switzerland.

The RCN offers a special student rate of membership to nurses undergoing supervised practice or adaptation programmes; HCA workers can also join. When applying, migrant nurses should clearly state that they are undergoing adaptation.

RCN members can also get independent information, advice, guidance and support about their career, and information on sources of educational funding.

The RCN encourages its members to share their skills and experience with other nurses and to play an active role in the RCN by becoming an RCN steward, safety or learning representative. In addition, the RCN equality networks provide opportunities for nurses to meet regularly. Qualified migrant nurses who are undertaking – or have been accepted onto – an adaptation or supervised practice placement working towards NMC registration, are eligible to join the RCN and to become RCN stewards and safety representatives.

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Useful contacts

The RCN Immigration Advice Service

www.rcn.org.uk/mss

Royal College of Nursing, 2nd Floor, AMP House,
Dingwall Road, Croydon CR0 2LX

RCN Direct (membership)

T: 0345 772 6100

www.rcn.org.uk/membership

Copse Walk, Cardiff Gate Business Park
Cardiff CF23 8XG

Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

T: +44 (0)20 7333 9333

F: +44 (0)20 7636 6935

Email address for overseas registration:

eu.enquiries@nmc-uk.org

Overseas general enquiries T: +44 (0)20 7333 6600

Email: overseasereg@nmc-uk.org

www.nmc-uk.org

23 Portland Place, London W1B 1PZ

Emergencies

T: 999 – if you need help from the police/ambulance/
fire service

T: 111 – to access health services in the UK for urgent
but not life-threatening cases

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

CAB aims to provide the advice people need for the problems they face and improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives. CAB provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. CAB does not charge for its help.

www.citizensadvice.org.uk



Royal College
of Nursing

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes
excellence in practice and shapes health policies

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RCN Online

www.rcn.org.uk

RCN Direct

www.rcn.org.uk/direct

0345 772 6100

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