

Key Changes to UK Immigration Rules- Statement of Changes HC 997

(Legally Enforceable from 22nd July 2025)

On 1 July 2025, the UK Government announced major changes to the Immigration Rules, effective from 22nd July 2025. These reforms raise skill and salary thresholds for Skilled Worker visas, close the overseas care worker route, and restructure shortage occupation listings, reflecting a shift toward prioritising higher-skilled migration.

Skilled Worker Route Overhaul:

- **Skill Level Raised:** The minimum skill requirement increases from RQF (Regulated Qualification Framework) Level 3 (A-level) to RQF Level 6 (graduate level), removing over 100 lower-skilled roles from eligibility
- **Salary Thresholds Increased:**
 - *General threshold:* £41,700 (up from £38,700)
 - *Minimum hourly rate:* £17.13 (up from £15.88)
 - *Occupation-specific rates* apply (e.g., Marketing Directors now require £87,300)
- **Transitional Protection:** Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) issued before 21 July 2025 can still use the old thresholds, even if the visa is applied for later.

Closure of Overseas Social Care Worker Route:

- From 22 July 2025, no new overseas applications will be accepted for care worker roles.
- In-country extensions and job changes are allowed until 22 July 2028, but applicants must have been employed for at least 3 months by their sponsor.

Immigration Salary List & Temporary Shortage Occupation List:

- The *Immigration Salary List* will be temporarily expanded to include some RQF Level 3–5 roles.
- A new *Temporary Shortage Occupation List* will be introduced to allow time-limited access for critical roles that don't require a degree.
- The current list will be phased out by the end of 2026.

Closure of ARAP Scheme:

- *The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)* will be closed to new principal applicants from 1st July 2025

Further resources:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statement-of-changes-to-the-immigration-rules-hc-997-1-july-2025/explanatory-memorandum-to-the-statement-of-changes-to-the-immigration-rules-hc-997-1-july-2025-accessible>

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Practical steps employers can take to prepare for the upcoming UK immigration rule changes taking effect on 22 July 2025:

1. Review Your Current Sponsored Workforce

- Identify employees on Skilled Worker or Health and Care visas.
- Check if any are in roles affected by the skill level or salary threshold changes.
- Ensure Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS) are issued before 21 July to benefit from transitional protections.

2. Audit Job Roles and Salary Bands

- Compare current salaries against the new minimum thresholds (e.g., £41,700 or £17.13/hour).
- Reassess job descriptions to ensure they meet the **RQF Level 6** requirement.

3. Plan for the Closure of the Overseas Care Worker Route

- Finalise any overseas recruitment before 22 July 2025.
- Ensure care workers already in the UK meet the **3-month employment rule** for future extensions.

4. Update Recruitment and Sponsorship Policies

- Align internal processes with the new Immigration Salary List and Temporary Shortage Occupation List.
- Train HR teams and hiring managers on the new eligibility criteria.

5. Communicate with Affected Staff

- Provide clear guidance to sponsored workers about how the changes may impact them.
- Offer support for visa extensions or role changes where needed.

Further resources:

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