



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) BRIEFING: NHS STAFF – CONCESSIONS FOR FRONTLINE WORKERS

The UK government has recognised the contribution overseas national health workers have made in the UK to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic and has introduced and expanded a number of concessions in relation to visa restrictions.

Some frontline health workers (see below) and their families will get their [visas automatically extended](#) by **one year** (from their visa expiry date), if their visas are due to expire before **1 October 2020**. These applications will be free of charge and will need to be arranged through the worker's employer.

On 29 April 2020 the Home Office expanded the list of frontline health workers who will qualify. These now include all of the following (whether working for the NHS or an independent health and care provider):

- biochemist
- biological scientist
- dental practitioner
- health professional
- medical practitioner
- medical radiographer
- midwife
- nurse
- occupational therapist
- ophthalmologist
- paramedic
- pharmacist
- physiotherapist
- podiatrist
- psychologist
- social worker
- speech and language therapist
- therapy professional

In addition to the one-year visa extension, the Home Office has also introduced a number of concessions to the general visa restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. These include;



PLACE OF WORK

Qualified frontline staff can now work at any NHS hospital during the coronavirus outbreak if their sponsor can maintain their sponsorship duties.

Sponsors will not need to notify UKVI of the change to place of work.

DIFFERENT OR EXTRA FRONTLINE WORK DUE TO CORONAVIRUS

Frontline staff can carry out supplementary work in any role at any skill level during the coronavirus outbreak. There is also now no restriction on the number of hours they can work.

NHS FRONTLINE STAFF MAY VOLUNTEER AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF HOURS

There is no longer a limit on the number of hours qualified frontline staff can work or volunteer each week if they are a:

- tier 4 student
- tier 2 worker and their NHS job is a second job
- visiting academic researcher
- holder of a short-term visa and are permitted to volunteer

PRE-REGISTRATION NURSES AND THE OSCE

The deadline for pre-registration nurses in the UK to sit the Occupational Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) has been extended to 31 December 2020.

If a nurse does not pass on the first attempt, they will have until 31 May 2021 to pass the exam.

This policy, as with all Coronavirus (COVID-19) immigration policies and guidance, is evolving and is frequently updated. This document is current as at 29 April 2020. For specific advice and up to date information, please contact a member of the Penningtons Manches Cooper LLP immigration team: immigration.enquiries@penningtonslaw.com