



# **Pre-Employment and Induction Guide for Overseas Workers, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Scotland**

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## Introduction

In Scotland, 1 in 13 people work in social services<sup>1</sup>. Every day they make a difference to people’s lives. With opportunities to gain new skills, qualifications, and personal fulfilment a job in social care could make a difference to your life too.

This guide has been written to help you as employees understand the recruitment and induction processes of social care organisations. It focuses on the additional information specific to overseas workers, refugees and asylum seekers and the organisations that employ them. As a new employee you can expect to receive some form of induction package, in addition to this guide, from your new employer.

A [Glossary of Terms](#) can be found at the end of this document.

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<sup>1</sup> [Scottish Trades Union Congress Care Report 2023](#)

## Benefits of working in social care

Why choose a career in social care? Although similar to healthcare, there are a range of benefits to working in social care, these include but are not limited to:

1. **Strong sense of community:** Social care roles are often located within small teams. This can create a sense of camaraderie and community among staff, residents and their families, fostering a supportive work environment.
2. **Building relationships with the individuals you support:** Whether working in a care home or supporting someone in their own home, you'll have an opportunity to build meaningful and long-term relationships. This personal connection can be emotionally rewarding and fulfilling for both you and the people you support.
3. **Making a positive difference to the people you support:** There are a variety of social care roles, all of which make real and positive differences to people's lives, whether it's helping them to remain in their own homes, providing personal care, supporting physical and mental wellbeing, supporting care home residents to socialise and engage in a range of activities or ensuring a safe and nurturing environment.
4. **Minimal bureaucracy/more hands-on approach:** Social care employers, particularly care homes, often have a flat organisational structure. This can lead to quick decision-making and more time spent working directly with people.
5. **Varied roles and responsibilities:** Working in social care offers a wide range of responsibilities, with opportunities to engage in various tasks, from direct caregiving to administrative duties. This variety keeps the job interesting and allows you to develop a diverse range of knowledge and skills.
6. **Working patterns:** Social care offers varying working patterns, ranging from sessional or part-time to full-time hours. You are also likely to know quite far in advance what your shift pattern will be. Having consistent working hours can be beneficial for maintaining work-life balance and reducing fatigue.
7. **Opportunities for career progression:** No matter where you start a career in social care there are opportunities to grow, develop and progress. You should receive on-the-job induction, training and support to undertake relevant qualifications.

If you are looking for a role in social care in the UK, you may not be sure what the difference is between a care home role and a care **at** home role. With a care home role, you will usually work in one location, where the individuals you are caring for will all be residents. In a care **at** home role, you would be expected to visit people in their own homes, and although this will require some degree of travel the amount varies from walking around a single estate to driving between towns. You can find out more about the difference by watching this short video '[Care Home or Care at Home<sup>2</sup>](#)'.

This guide can be read alongside the [National Induction Framework](#), which will support you, together with your employer, to identify what knowledge, skills and

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<sup>2</sup> Produced by NES Centre for Workforce Supply (Social Care)

guidance you need to be equipped and competent to safely provide person-centred support to people in your new role.

## Modern Slavery

Modern slavery is a growing problem in the UK as criminals seek to take advantage of the growing demand for care workers, and the changes to visa requirements. Modern slavery is a risk for refugees, asylum seekers and overseas workers.

Scotland's social care system is made up of organisations that provide personal care, or support, to adults in need or at risk. Social care services are delivered by local authorities, charitable and third sector organisations, commercially run care homes, and care at home companies. Any of these organisations may decide to recruit staff from outside of the United Kingdom (UK), as internationally recruited staff are an integral part of the Scottish social care workforce, with ethical recruitment being a key part of the Scottish government's plan to grow that workforce.

Genuine, ethical recruiters and employers in Scotland want the experience of an international recruit to be as positive as possible. They will provide a package of support from the moment that an offer of employment is made, help with travel to Scotland, arrange for temporary accommodation to allow you to settle in and many other support measures throughout your employment.

Although there are many ethical and reputable recruiters, there are some people and organisations who are not, indeed some of them are simply criminals that only wish to exploit vulnerable and sometimes desperate people who are seeking a new life.

There are a number of organisations in Scotland that are trying to combat modern slavery, so should you have any concerns try contacting the charity [Unseen](#) (confidential helpline 08000 121 700) or Police Scotland (dial 101), who have a dedicated modern slavery team.

Being able to recognise which organisations are ethical, and which to avoid, is critical to a successful transition to working in Scotland.

### **Be sure to follow these top tips when looking for a social care role in Scotland:**

- If you are approached by a recruitment agency, then make sure that they are listed on the UK's [official ethical recruiters list](#). Agencies on this list have agreed to abide by a [code of practice](#) and should be the only agencies that ethical employers in Scotland are using.
- DO NOT pay any money to an agency or employer to find you a job. It is illegal for any agency in the UK to charge anyone to find them employment in the UK. However, they can charge for additional services, such as help with writing a [CV](#).
- If an agency tries to charge you money to find you employment, then walk away and find a different agency to work with.
- You can report any such organisation to NHS Employers, by emailing [internationalrecruitment@nhsconfed.org](mailto:internationalrecruitment@nhsconfed.org), who will then investigate.

- There is a saying in the UK that if something seems too good to be true, then it probably isn't true. Be sceptical and investigate further until you are sure that what is on offer is genuine.

For more detail and advice on how to avoid being exploited by unethical recruiters and employers read our guide '[International recruitment and avoiding scams](#)', or go to this [UK.Gov website](#).

## Understanding and proving your right to work

Your right to work depends on your immigration status in the UK. You may know this as a 'visa' or 'Leave to remain' or 'Leave to enter'. Leave to remain or leave to enter means that the visa holder has permission to remain in the UK or permission to enter the UK if travelling from another country. The 'leave' granted by the Home Office could be time limited or indefinite. Some people may not have a 'visa' or 'Leave to remain' or 'Leave to enter' for example if you claimed asylum in the UK and you are waiting for a decision.

All employers by law must check your right to work before employing you. This is a requirement even if you are British. If you already live in the UK but you don't have the right to work, you might be able to apply for it.

Before you start working make sure you know:

- Your immigration status.
- You have the right to work.
- Any restrictions on the type of work you can do.
- Any restrictions on the hours you can work.
- If the income from work will reduce or stop any other financial support you get, such as benefits from the government.

The [Gov.uk website](#) has further information on asylum and different immigration routes in the UK such as visit, work, study, settle or seek asylum in the UK.

## Overseas worker

You need to have a visa to work in the UK, such as a Health & Care Worker Visa (HCWV) or a student visa (with permission to work), you can find more information on [GOV.UK website](#). There are a variety of different visas that you could apply for, but the most suitable to work as a care worker is the HCWV. The HCWV has many advantages, for example it is cheaper to apply for and there is no requirement to pay the Health Surcharge Fee, which is a requirement for most other visas.

## Asylum seeker

If you are seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations, you can make an asylum claim for protection in the UK and while you are waiting to be recognised as a refugee your legal status will be an 'asylum seeker'.

After claiming asylum, you do not have automatic permission to enter paid employment, although you can volunteer with charitable or public organisations (but not with private companies).

If you made a direct claim for asylum after arriving in the UK, and if no decision has been reached after one year, you can apply to the Home Office for permission to work with the help of your solicitor. You can only work in occupations on the [Shortage Occupation List](#), which includes most care worker roles, you can find more information on the [GOV.UK website](#).

If you made a claim during the time you were on a visa, e.g. student, skilled worker, and your current visa allows you to work, your right to work might continue but there may be other restrictions which will be indicated on your [Application Registration Card](#) and Home Office Letter.

## Refugee

A refugee is someone whose individual application for protection has been recognised under the UN Convention on Refugees 1951. As a refugee, you are entitled to the same social and economic rights as any UK citizen. Refugees have full access to medical treatment, education, benefits, housing and employment. As a refugee, you have the right to work in the UK without any restrictions, the same as any other resident in the UK. You may receive different types of immigration status from the Home Office and the length of leave to remain can vary depending on the type of status you have.

You may have other types of leave such as Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave to remain which will vary in length of time. If you arrived through the Ukraine schemes you will have three years leave to remain. If arriving through Afghan schemes you will have indefinite leave to remain. If you are granted these types of leave, you will also have permission to work in the UK. Depending on the type of leave to remain you have, you can apply for further leave to remain and while the application for further leave is being considered, you will continue to have the same right to employment.

## Proving your right to work

Depending on your status, there are different processes to prove your right to work to your new employer.

## Application Registration Card (ARC)

ARC example - fictional person

If you are an asylum seeker, you will have an [Application Registration Card \(ARC\)](#).

Your ARC includes information on your:

- Name and nationality.
- Age, including whether the Home Office has disputed your age.

- Permission to work status in the UK and any restrictions.

The image shows an Application Registration Card (ARC) for Nadia Williams. The card is titled 'APPLICATION REGISTRATION CARD' and has the number 'ZR3004303'. It includes a photo of the holder, a signature, and a remarks section with three lines. The remarks section contains the following text: 'PERMIT TYPE - LINE 1', 'PERMIT TYPE - LINE 2', 'FRONT - LINE 1', 'FRONT - LINE 2', and 'FRONT - LINE 3'. The card also includes a section for 'TYPE OF PERMIT' and 'REMARKS'. The card is marked as a 'SAMPLE'.

Callout boxes provide the following information:

- The type of permit will read: ARC – CLAIMED ID
- The card will indicate that the applicant has claimed ASYLUM
- The remarks section will indicate relevant access to benefits, for example: NO PUBLIC FUNDS
- The remarks will also indicate work status, either:
  - NO WORK
  - WORK PERMITTED
  - WORK PERMITTED - SHORTAGE OCC
  - WORK PERMITTED - OTHER
  - WORK PERMITTED - STUDENT

Access to public funds status in the UK.

When permission to work is granted by the Home Office, you will be sent an updated ARC stating 'Work Permitted, Shortage Occupation' in the remarks section. You will also have a letter from the Home Office which indicates your permission to work.

You will need to apply for a [National Insurance Number](#) once you have received your updated ARC stating permission to work from the Home Office.

When you are offered a job and you are asked for evidence to prove your right to work, you will need to give your new employer your ARC card and the Home Office letter. Your employer must also use the [Employer Checking Service](#) to check your right to work.

## Biometric Residence Permit (BRP)

A [biometric residence permit](#) is usually issued if you have a form of leave to remain in the UK for longer than 6 months.

Your BRP can be used to confirm your identity, right to study and right to any public services or benefits. A BRP **cannot** be used to evidence your right to work, you must [prove your right to work](#) using the online government tool as explained below.



A BRP will include your:

- Name, date and place of birth.
- Fingerprints and a face/passport photo (this is the [biometric information](#)).

- Immigration status and any conditions of stay.
- Access to public funds, for example benefits and health services.
- [National Insurance](#) number if one has been issued.

When you have been successful with a job interview, you will be asked to evidence your right to work. You will need to generate a 'share code' and share this with the employer. To obtain this, you will need to go to the Government's website on [Prove Your Right to Work to an Employer](#). There are a few pages to navigate through and a 'share code' will be generated. This will need to be given to the employer along with your date of birth. Once the employer has the share code and date of birth from you, they would need to go to [View a Job Applicant's Right to Work](#) on GOV.uk.

The Government has an [Employer Checking Service](#) which employers can use to check someone's right to work, and also for more guidance, there is [An Employers Guide to Right to Work Checks](#).

The Home Office plans to digitalise immigration status information by end of 2024. This is why all physical BRP cards issued have 31.12.24 as an expiry date and will not match the length of people's immigration status. From 1 January 2025, the Home Office plans to give all individuals online access to their immigration status without a BRP card.

## 'UK immigration: ID check' app

If you have used the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to prove your identity when applying to stay in the UK, you may not have a physical BRP card. You will need to go to the government website to [view and prove your immigration status](#) online.

## Immigration advice

Immigration advice is a type of legal advice given about an individual's right to enter, remain and live in the UK. Immigration advice broadly includes advice on asylum, immigration and British nationality matters.

Only qualified immigration advisers can give immigration advice. They are either:

- Immigration lawyers regulated by an approved professional body such as the [Law Society of Scotland](#).
- [Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner](#) (OISC) regulated immigration advisers.

There are many organisations that will offer you immigration advice. Some are legal firms who will charge for their services, but unless your application has complicating circumstances paying for a lawyer is probably not necessary.

If you decide to engage a legal adviser, check what the fees are before you start. You should also have them confirm any advice in writing and keep you updated on progress with your case. Also, keep copies of any original documents that you pass to them. If you need help to pay the fees, then you may be eligible for [legal aid funding](#), but before agreeing to any contract with a legal advisor check they can provide legal aid.



A very good starting point for finding free advice and information is [Citizens' Advice Scotland](#).

Citizens' Advice Scotland might be able to help with issues like:

- Applying to the EU Settlement Scheme.
- Problems with coming to the UK or staying in the UK - for example, applying for entry clearance, leave to enter, leave to remain or residence permits.
- Becoming a British citizen - also known as 'naturalisation'.
- Right to work, claim benefits and use public services in the UK.
- Getting replacement immigration documents.

Your local Citizens Advice can help if they have a specialist immigration adviser. If they can't help, you could:

- Ask them to refer you to another organisation or a solicitor.
- [Search for an immigration adviser](#) near you.
- [Search for a solicitor](#) near you.

You can find an immigration adviser who is registered with the [OISC](#). There are different competency levels and categories of immigration advice. This means immigration advisers can only give you advice on immigration matters they are qualified to deal with. If you received poor advice from an immigration adviser, solicitor or barrister in the UK, you can download and fill in a form to [complain to the Office of the Immigration Services](#), (instructions are available in different languages). You can do this even if you did not find them through the OISC.

## Finding and applying for roles in social care

Finding your first job in the UK can be difficult. You do not need to have care experience, or a qualification, to apply for care support roles but you may be discouraged to apply for these roles if you are unsure. However, many people have experience of looking after relatives or friends, and for roles in social care, you can get your qualifications after you have commenced work.

## Understanding the recruitment process

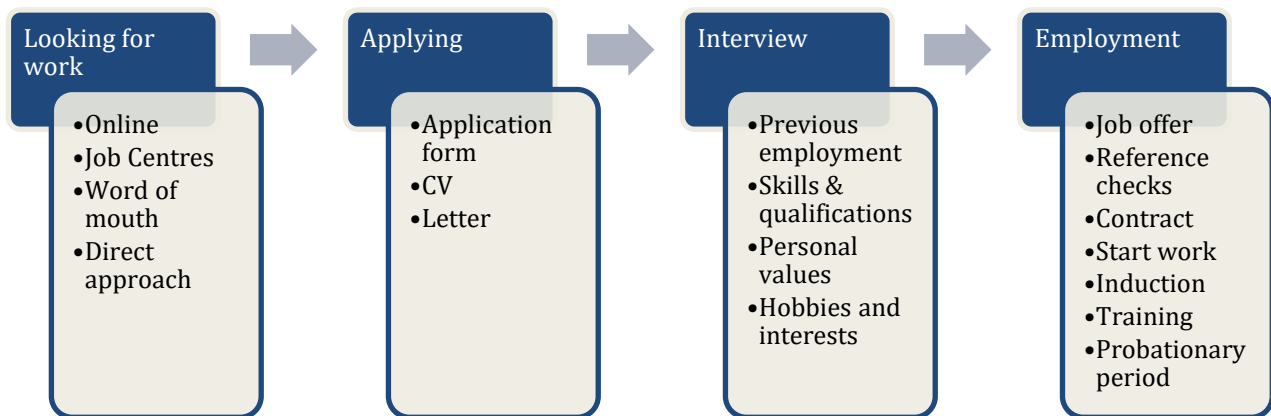


Figure 1: The general recruitment process.

Different countries have different recruitment processes, and some have no recruitment process at all. You may not have experience of applying for jobs using a CV (also known as [a Curriculum Vitae](#), or *résumé*) or an application form where you must describe how your skills and experience relate to the job specification. UK recruitment processes can take considerable time due to the different stages involved. This section will help explain the different stages.

## Looking for work

Finding how or where to look for work can be difficult if you're not familiar with these options. If you are receiving Universal Credit from the job centre, speak with your work coach and they might be able to direct you to some opportunities. If you visit job fairs, you will get to meet and speak to employers directly. Here are some other suggestions to help you get started to find social care jobs:

- General job search websites:
  - <https://www.s1jobs.com/>.
  - <https://uk.indeed.com/>.
  - <https://www.totaljobs.com/>.
- Skills Development Scotland (for careers guidance):
  - <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/#>.
- Charitable/Voluntary Sector (Non-Government Organisations):
  - <https://goodmoves.com/>.
- Jobs with the local authority councils:
  - <https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/social-care>.

## Applying

Once you've identified the job you want to apply for, the next step will be to submit a [CV](#) or application form, and some may ask for a cover letter.

You will not be offered a job interview immediately after you have applied. Your CV or application form will be looked at to see if you are suitable for the role. So, it is important that you indicate your skills and experience that relate to the job on your CV, application form or covering letter.

You may have a range of specialised skills and experience, but be unaware how these can be transferable to a wide range of roles in the UK. If you are in the UK, you can find an [employment advisor](#) for support with your CV and application form and how to best promote your skills and experience. Some employability organisations might not be able to support those who have no recourse to public funds (students, asylum seekers and overseas workers), so do ask when you make contact.

Overseas workers may be able to seek advice from international recruitment agencies, or from potential employers who could provide resources to assist with recruitment preparation. The SSSC careers website has information relating to [careers in care](#), and lots of useful information. The NES Centre for Workforce Supply (Social Care) have developed [a toolkit for international workers](#).

## Curriculum vitae (CV)

A CV is a written overview of your skills, education and work experience. When you are applying for jobs, you may be asked to submit a CV. Don't assume that the employer will know what skills or experience you have. Different roles can have different responsibilities, especially if it is in a different country to the UK. Please see this [career website](#) for advice on creating a CV.

## Application forms

Some jobs will not accept CVs, and you will need to complete a job application form. Once you have a CV, it will be easy to transfer some of the information across to an application form, for example education and career history.

In job application forms, you need to write a personal or supporting statement where you will need to demonstrate how your skills, qualities and experience meet the requirements set out on the job specification by giving specific examples. For more information and guidance on completing job application forms, please visit the following websites.

- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/applying-for-jobs/write-a-successful-job-application>.
- <https://www.cv-library.co.uk/career-advice/start/job-application-form-tips-tricks/>.

## Covering letter

Some employers may require you submit a cover letter as a form of introduction to your CV or application form. A cover letter complements your CV or application form, to find out more or see examples, please visit this [careers website](#).

## Qualifications

If you already hold qualifications and prior learning from your home country you may be able to have these recognised in the UK. Matching and evidencing overseas qualifications may be challenging if you don't have documents of your formal

qualifications or if your qualifications are not recognised in the UK. [UK ENIC](#) is a centre for the recognition and evaluation of international qualifications and skills and you can apply to UK-ENIC for a [Statement of Comparability](#). There is a cost for applying for the Statement of Comparability and you will need to provide certified translations of documents if they are not in English. However, if your qualifications are in one of the following languages then you don't need to provide certified translations: Arabic, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian.

If you wish to work as a social worker (not the same as a social care worker), you must have a recognised social work qualification before you can start employment. The SSSC assesses social work qualifications that have been obtained from outside of the UK to ensure they meet the requirements for social workers in Scotland. Towards the end of 2022 the SSSC agreed to waive all charges for the assessment process, including aptitude tests if required, for refugees, asylum seekers and those who arrived under one of the nationality-based schemes. An 'aptitude test' for employment is a test that measures a job candidate's abilities to perform certain tasks and react to different situations. It is used by employers to determine the suitability of a candidate for employment.

The SSSC does not assess non-UK social care qualifications as holding a qualification is not a pre-requisite for starting employment as a social care worker. However, once you enter a social care role you currently have up to 5 years to obtain an appropriate qualification as part of your registration conditions; a list of qualifications can be found on the [SSSC website](#). When undertaking a UK social care qualification, you may be able to claim recognition for any prior learning (RPL) or qualification(s) you have gained overseas; you can find out more about [RPL and how to make a claim on the SSSC website](#).

## References

The purpose of references is so that your prospective employer can obtain relevant information to check your employment history, experience and suitability for a post. If the post involves directly supporting or caring for people, or in other ways has an impact on people experiencing care, it is important that an employer finds out whether the referee (usually your previous employer) is satisfied that you are suitable for the role and if there are any concerns.

If your most recent employer is not relevant because the role did not involve providing care and support, then you should provide a reference from the most recent relevant employer. Generic 'to whom it may concern' references are not appropriate, as it can be difficult to verify this type of reference.

If you cannot provide a professional reference, perhaps because you are a school leaver or you just don't have a previous work record, then you can ask for one from your support worker, employability advisor, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tutor, or another suitable UK contact.

If you are asking someone to provide a character reference (someone who knows you, but cannot be a friend or family member), then share a copy of the job

description and/or person specification with them so that they can comment on your suitability for that particular role.

Employers will always keep accurate records of the recruitment process and any reasons for seeking and accepting references that are not from previous employers.

## Interview preparation

When the employer looks over your CV/application form, they will consider if your skills, experience and values fit in with their organisation and whether to offer you a job interview.

Job interviews can be very daunting, especially if you are not aware of what employers are looking for. Employers want to make sure that you are the right person for the job, so will want to hear more about your experiences and your skills to see how you have dealt with certain situations relating to the job. It will be necessary to speak about you and your values, and the skills and competencies you can offer.

Interview questions are usually based around the job description and specification (sometimes called essential criteria). You should prepare some examples from a past job, college/university, or from your personal home life to talk about. You may also be asked about your hobbies and interests so that the employer can match you with someone to support if you are successful with the interview

When you are asked questions around your behaviours, skills or experience, e.g. 'Tell me about a time when you...' it is useful to follow the [STAR approach](#) to structure your answers:

- **Situation:** briefly explain the situation you were involved in that needed a solution.
- **Task:** briefly explain what your tasks were to resolve the problem.
- **Action:** what did you do to resolve the situation (how did you do it and why did you do it?).
- **Result:** what was the result of your actions, what did you learn?

Body language is an important part of the interview process where the interviewer may base their assessment on how you express yourself non-verbally. Body language is also important when caring for someone, for example, smiling and eye contact can show someone that you are engaged and listening.

For more information on preparing for interviews and examples of typical social care interview questions, please visit:

- <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/interview-tips>.
- <https://caretocare.scot/next-steps/interview-questions/>.
- <https://uk.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/body-language-in-interview>.

If you have an employability advisor, you can ask them for a mock interview to practice.

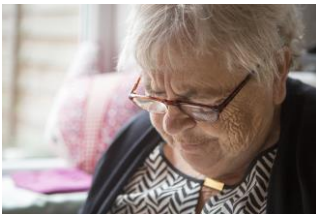
## Employment offer

If you have been successful at the interview, you will be offered employment. This does not mean that you can start work immediately as your employer will need to go through some checks first.

## Reference checks

Your new employer will need to contact the references you provided to verify your employment history, experience and suitability for the job you've been offered. If your employer is unable to receive a response, they might ask you to provide an alternative reference.

## Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) checks



Disclosure Scotland is a public organisation that helps employers make safer decisions when they are recruiting people. Through the PVG Scheme, it also makes sure unsuitable people don't work with vulnerable groups, including children. A disclosure is a document containing impartial and confidential UK criminal history information held by the police and government departments that employers can use to make safer recruitment decisions. Some convictions are so minor and historical that they are not relevant and won't be included in your disclosure.

If you are undertaking regulated work, such as working in a care home, then you are required to join the PVG Scheme. This requirement applies even if you have recently arrived in the UK so that employers will be informed if there's any change in your status. Without this, you cannot start work.

There is a [cost](#) for the PVG which will differ if you are new member (never applied before) or if you are already a member (applied in the past). Your employer will help you with this process and you may be required to pay for this.

## Overseas criminal record checks

Disclosure Scotland does not have access to criminal record information held outside the UK. Employers can ask you to provide a criminal record certificate, where available, from an appropriate government or police agency in the country where you were born or resided, and you may be required to pay any associated cost of translation. If the certificate contains offences without a similar offence in Scots law, then these should not have any impact on your UK employment. For more information on the availability of criminal record checks visit the [GOV.UK website](#).

As a refugee or asylum seeker it may not be possible for you to obtain a criminal record check due to your reasons for fleeing your home country, such as risks to your family. If this is the case, explain the situation to the recruiting manager or email the Scottish Refugee Council for advice: [employability@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:employability@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk).

## Employment contract

When you are offered employment, you will be sent an employment contract which is a legal agreement with the employer. This will include a job title, hours and rate of pay, how much holiday you'll have, rules of sick leave and sick pay, maternity leave etc. It is important that you read your employment contract carefully and understand what your rights and responsibilities are.

For more information about your rights at work, please visit [Citizens Advice \(Scotland\)](#) or [ACAS](#) websites.

## Induction

Once you have signed your contract and have a start date, you will be required to register with [Scottish Social Services Council](#) (SSSC). The SSSC is the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland, therefore most people working in care are required to register with the SSSC. When you start, your employer will help you with the registration and you will be required to pay a fee. The fee varies depending on the specific job role.

During induction, you will usually:

- Be offered mandatory training, such as assisting and moving people, basic first aid, health and safety, as well as other training.
- Be offered the opportunity to undertake an appropriate qualification for your role. You don't usually need a qualification to start your career, and many employers hire people based on their values and positive attitude. If you are required to register with the SSSC, you must agree to complete a qualification in an agreed time, currently 5 years. This means that you will work and be paid, and your employer will help you to gain a qualification that is recognised by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA). A list of the qualifications required for different social care jobs can be found on the [SSSC tool](#).
- Shadow colleagues so that you know what to do if you have to work alone, for example going to other people's home to care for them (home care).
- Have regular meetings with your supervisor/manager to make sure that you are settling in well and understanding your job role.

Here are some other types of learning you could do if they are not already covered during your employer's induction:

- **Introduction to the organisation:** Ask your employer for details of the organisation's ethos and values, its mission statement (if they have one) and its aims and objectives. An organisation chart may also be useful, including job titles and roles. There will be many other useful bits of information, perhaps ask other recently arrived staff what they found to be most useful, or what they would have wished to know when they arrived.
- **Introduction to the management team:** It's always good for a new employee to understand the management structure, particularly in larger organisations where it may not be immediately obvious. Knowing who your line manager is, and who to turn to if they are not available, are essential aspects of becoming comfortable in a new role.
- **Support available:** Ask your employer where you can go to ask more specific job-related queries that perhaps your line-manager may not know the answers to. For example, questions about pay issues would usually go to the Human Resources (HR) department within the organisation.
- **Work related responsibilities:** If training has not been discussed when you start, then ask your employer what you are expected to do, by when and how to access the training. There may also be policies, guidelines and other important documents that you need to read, so make sure your employer tells you what those are.
- **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):** This is a confidential and non-judgemental counselling service that many employers offer. Use it if you are feeling distressed, perhaps due to ongoing issues in your home country, or challenges settling into a new working environment and culture, and you don't want to speak with your manager; you can find out more about this from the HR team.



## Other areas of consideration

### Language

Limited English language skills can be a barrier to employment. Communication with people in care and writing notes are required for social care roles. Social worker roles will require an even higher level of English skills. The levels of language proficiency required will depend on the role and employers can consider what level is required. Sometimes on-the-job language learning can be an effective way to overcome this.

You may speak a language(s) other than English and these languages are additional skills that can benefit social care roles as increasingly there are more people from diverse cultures accessing care, so be sure to promote your additional language skills.

If you wish to access English language training, then first speak to your employer who may be willing to fund some training for you. There are many providers of online English language training, these could be live lessons with a tutor or self-directed study at your own time and pace. If you would prefer a more face-to-face approach, then search for local classes near you; libraries and ethnic groups are good sources of information for what may be available locally.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses are for learners whose first language is not English. Learners develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in the English language, and also their knowledge of language. Refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to study ESOL and there are often part-time classes. If you are attending ESOL classes, ask your employer to consider shifts around your class times.

The local colleges usually have a long waiting list making it difficult to access ESOL classes but if you are looking for an available course try these sites:

- [ESOL Courses in Scotland.](#)
- [ESOL register in Glasgow.](#)
- [Glasgow Life English Language Courses.](#)
- Your local authority's webpage as they may offer free community classes.

You can find more information about ESOL classes on the [SQA](#) website.

If you have studied ESOL or equivalent e.g. IELTS/SCQF/CEFR in another country, you can find out the equivalents on the [SQA's ESOL Qualification](#) webpage.

The SSSC guide [Communication Skills for Caring](#) highlights some online and local resources for developing general skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking, as well as providing links to further opportunities to improve English language skills. Local community group activities and volunteering are also good ways to develop language skills.

## Acceptable language and behaviour

It is important to familiarise yourself with the language and behaviour expected when working in social care in the UK. Some language and behaviour may be unfamiliar to you or different from that which you are used to. Your employer will support you to understand acceptable professional language and behaviours, and this will often be included in any induction.

You may hear more formal language at work than you might in home life, familiarising yourself with workplace culture, language and behaviour will help you understand your role and communicate more effectively. As part of your induction, you may be offered the opportunity for training and to shadow a colleague(s); the aim is to support you to understand what language and behaviour is professionally acceptable in your new organisation.

Your employer will have a set of policies and procedures which clearly set out their expectations of you. It is important that you take time to familiarise yourself with these policies and procedures and ask questions if there is anything you don't understand.

All social care employees registered with the SSSC must adhere to their [Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers](#), these set out the behaviours and values expected of all social service workers and their employers, and it is a condition of your registration that you adhere to these in all aspects of your work. Both employer policies and procedures and SSSC Codes of Practice are there to ensure everyone working in or accessing social care is treated fairly and with respect. Anyone in breach of the Codes of Practice may be disciplined, have their employment terminated and be removed from the SSSC register.

The UK has a diverse and multicultural population and all social care employees and employers have a legal duty to ensure that people accessing services are treated fairly and not discriminated against. [The Equality Act \(2010\)](#), makes it illegal to discriminate against anyone with a [protected characteristic](#), these are:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Gender reassignment.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Race.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Sexual orientation.

## UK work culture

You might find that the work culture in the UK is different from what you are used to. Adapting to this may take you a little time. For example, working with your colleagues as a team and asking for help are common practice. Most managers in the UK welcome an employee asking for help as this helps minimise the potential for errors,

so if unsure, seek help, rather than getting something wrong. Good communication in team working is seen as a strength.

## Cultural differences

As indicated earlier, if you compare any two countries, there will be cultural aspects that will be similar and other aspects that are very different. Sometimes those cultural differences can be embraced and celebrated, but some differences can prove controversial.

For example, in some countries, homosexuality is still a crime and it is not in the UK. In other countries, people with disabilities are not treated with the level of care, dignity and respect expected in the UK. In other countries, it is frowned upon to place older adults in care homes as it is deemed neglectful of the younger generation who are expected to look after their elders at home. If you are new to the UK, it is important to be aware of how others around you act and the way they speak about potentially sensitive subjects. If unsure about these cultural differences, speak to your line manager, mentor or buddy (a buddy is a colleague some employers may match you with to support you during your induction and early employment).

Your employer may use a values-based approach to recruitment to understand how your cultural attitudes are aligned to those of the organisation thus minimising the uncertainties that may arise as a result of perceived or obvious differences.

The SSSC resource '[Right values, right people: recruitment toolkit](#)', contains relevant information for employers and employees to help embed values-based approaches to recruitment and retention.

## Technology and digital skills

In a digital world the expectations of social care employers, the workforce and people who use services are changing. It's becoming more and more important that workers are suitably equipped by developing their digital capabilities. You may have limited digital skills and no access to devices and the internet, especially if you are a refugee or asylum seeker with little to no money. You may also be less used to using digital applications when applying for jobs, such as Microsoft Word forms, online forms and other applications. A lack of digital skills and access can make it difficult to find a job.

Sometimes an employer will accept handwritten applications and it is worth asking if a handwritten application form would be accepted.

You will usually find that your local library has computers, provides free internet access and may also be able to provide details of opportunities for local training, some of which may be free. There may also be 'internet cafes' near you, although as commercial businesses there is likely to be a charge.

The SSSC have developed a free, online resource '[23 Things: Digital](#)' to help social care workers develop their digital capabilities to support learning and practice.

## Wellbeing

[PTSD UK](#) estimates that 40% of refugees and about 90% of refugee children experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). [The Royal College of Psychiatry](#) records migration and forced displacement can have a huge impact on the physical and mental wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers who may experience a sense of loss of identity, culture and community as well as exposure to potential discrimination.

If you have experienced trauma, you may not be aware that caring for someone can have a subconscious emotional impact on your wellbeing. For example, conversations with people you support may trigger an emotional response which you're not aware of but may affect the way you care for the person. If you notice that this has an impact on you and your work, tell your employer, as they have a duty of care towards your wellbeing at work. The SSSC publish a [Codes of Practice for Employers](#) which details their responsibilities towards you as a worker. Many employers can offer confidential counselling support as well as an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Wellbeing isn't just about dealing with traumatic experiences. There are many other factors that could potentially impact on your physical and mental health. It is vital that social care workers can look after the wellbeing of themselves, colleagues and those they are providing care and support to. The SSSC has a [wellbeing resource](#) to help people cope with the particular stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the guide is also a great starting point for anyone interested in knowing more about the principles of 'Psychological First Aid'. The [National Wellbeing Hub](#) provides additional information to support the psychosocial wellbeing of all who work in health, social work and social care in Scotland. This resource recognises a collective effort towards supporting wellbeing at work, whilst highlighting the employer's duty of care as a compassionate leader, exemplifying an open and trustworthy culture to promote psychological safety at work.

## Discrimination

As an asylum seeker, refugee or overseas worker, you may feel you are being discriminated against. Discrimination occurs where you have been treated unfairly and/or have been harassed unlawfully. You can prove discrimination if it falls under any of the protected characteristics as stipulated by the [Equality Act 2010](#) which provides you with legal protection against discrimination. These protected characteristics include:

- Age.
- Sex.
- Race.
- Disability.
- Sexuality.
- Religion or belief.
- Pregnancy and maternity.
- Marriage and civil partnership.
- Gender reassignment i.e., being/becoming transgender.

Discrimination can in turn be perceived, that is 'discrimination by perception' and this may result in a withdrawal of services or opportunities due to someone's perception of you. This is discriminatory and applies for all protected characteristics except pregnancy and maternity as well as marriage and civil partnerships. Discrimination can occur in the workplace hence it is vital for you to take positive action against discriminatory practices. If you have any concerns about unfair treatment at work, speak to your line manager or seek advice from your human resource department.

[Fair Work Scotland](#) is the Scottish Government's vision for a fair and inclusive workplace by 2025 where individuals have access to a working life which considers access to opportunities, income security, having a voice and sense of belonging, being respected, and having a sense of fulfilment and wellbeing at work. It aims to minimise any undue hardship as a result of work for all who live and work in Scotland.

For more information on Discrimination and Fair work, visit:

- ['Discrimination: your rights'](#).
- [Equality - Scottish Social Services Council \(sssc.uk.com\)](#).
- <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/law-and-courts/discrimination/#sec88070>.
- [The Fair Work Framework - The Fair Work Convention](#).

## Responsibilities of a sponsored worker

### Reporting changes to an employer

If you have a visa to work in the UK then some changes to your personal circumstances must be reported, by your employer, to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) within 10 working days. You must inform your employer, so that they can report to UKVI, of:

- Any change of contact details, for example address, telephone number or email.
- Periods of unauthorised absence, this does not include authorised annual leave or appropriately reported sickness absence.
- Changes to job title, salary, work address, duties or working hours.

It is important for you to know who, in the organisation, to report any changes to, as this may not be your line-manager who has, for example, changed your work hours.

### Complying with the conditions of a visa

As well as reporting requirements, your responsibilities as a sponsored worker are to always comply with the terms of your visa. This means you must not undertake any work (whether paid or otherwise) that is not permitted by your visa. You must not exceed the total number of hours per week you are permitted to work, including paid and unpaid work with different employers.

Different visas may have different restrictions and requirements and you must always be aware of what those are and comply with them.

# Housing and accommodation options

## Asylum seekers

If you claimed asylum and have nowhere to live and no money to support yourself, you may be entitled to Home Office accommodation and financial support. This is called Asylum Support and you can find out more on the GOV.UK website on [what money and accommodation support you will get](#). If you find work, you may lose Asylum Support as you are no longer destitute and you may have to move or contribute towards rent payments of your Home Office accommodation or move into privately rented accommodation. Advice in this area falls under immigration advice and you should speak to your legal adviser and [Migrant Help](#).

## Refugees

If you are recognised as a refugee, you have the same housing rights as UK citizens. This means you can access all housing options including social housing, from both local authorities and housing associations as well as private rented accommodation and you are entitled to homelessness support on the same basis as Scottish residents. Make sure to check what homelessness duties the local authority has towards you as it may depend on your accommodation situation or a connection to the local area.

Get initial advice and information on your housing rights from [Citizens Advice Scotland](#) or [Shelter](#).

If you have made a homeless application, you may be moved into temporary furnished accommodation, this will mean you are liable for rent including council tax, utility bills etc. If you start working, you might still receive Universal Credit, and may be entitled to Housing Benefit to cover some of the cost of your temporary accommodation, but this depends on your income. It is advisable to speak with a financial well-being officer for a [benefit calculation](#) to assess your financial position.

When the local authority begins to look for permanent accommodation for you and your household, they will do their best to match your needs. Once the local authority has identified a property that is suitable for you, they will contact you and let you know. They will ask you to go through a process, in which you view the property and sign the tenancy. This may take several months or longer. If you refuse the offer of permanent accommodation, you may risk losing the support from the local authority to find any other permanent accommodation. If you are in this situation, contact the [Citizens' Advice Scotland](#) for advice in the first instance.

When you are moving home check with your employer to see if they offer special leave for the house move, and if not, you can take annual leave from work to organise the house move.

## Overseas workers

Employers are encouraged to provide accommodation for overseas staff for the first 3 months (gold standard) as a way of minimising any undue hardship while relocating to

Scotland. Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 encourages equal opportunity for all individuals who are eligible to live and work in Scotland to have access to housing and housing services. The [International Recruitment into Adult Social Care toolkit](#) provides further information on provisions for accommodation for individuals from overseas.

## Privately renting a property

There are two ways of privately renting a property, either directly from the landlord or from a letting agent. [You can use popular websites to find rental properties.](#)



If you are [renting directly from the landlord](#), before you agree to anything, make sure your landlord is registered with the local authority; you can check this using the [Landlord Registration Scotland website](#). If your landlord isn't registered, they're renting the property out illegally.

A landlord may have a letting agent handling the tenancy for them. If they do, the letting agent may be your main point of contact right through your entire tenancy. All letting agents in Scotland must be registered and follow a Code of Practice and abide by [letting agent regulations](#).

Normally you would be expected to pay for the first month's rent and your deposit on or before the day you are going to move into the property, so make sure that you get a receipt for any money paid and keep the receipt somewhere safe. The size of the deposit can vary, but the landlord is not allowed to charge more than two months' rent, so if your rent is £500 a month the landlord can only ask for a deposit up to £1,000. Some local authorities may be able to help with rent deposit through a rent deposit scheme if you are eligible. For more information, please check [Help to pay a deposit and first month's rent](#).

When you move in the landlord must give you all the tenancy terms in writing and an inventory of everything in the property, including its condition. Make sure you check this very carefully and as soon as possible, then notify the landlord or agent if anything is wrong or needs adding and keep a copy of the final document.

Although the landlord is required to make sure the property's appliances and utilities are safe to use, it is a very good idea to make sure that you know how to turn off the mains water, electricity and gas, just in case there is an emergency.

If you are in the UK under one of the Ukraine and Afghan schemes you have the same housing rights as UK citizens. However, when you first arrive you may be living in hotels or with hosts. Private renting may be challenging as you may not have a credit history or references, which will also be applicable to other refugees. Speak to your local authority who may advise you on where to find advice on this. Shelter has a useful section on [Finding a private rented home](#).





## Renting property from a housing association or local authority

[Housing associations and local councils](#) offer an alternative to renting from a private landlord, if you meet the requirements. Anyone over the age of 16 has the right to apply and when you apply, your housing needs will be checked, and your application will be held on a housing list. Organisations decide who gets offered housing based on a 'points' or 'banding' system, usually according to their allocations policy. Points and bands are based on housing need. For example, you're likely to be offered housing first if you:

- Are homeless.
- Live in overcrowded conditions.
- Have a medical condition made worse by your current home.

You might have to join a waiting list and you're not guaranteed to get a property.

If you are applying through a common housing register, instead of filling in separate applications for each landlord in a specific area, you could fill in one form and join a common housing list that several social landlords use to allocate their housing. Some authorities operate a choice-based letting scheme that lets you tell your housing provider which properties you're interested in.

## Moving into a rented accommodation

When you move into a new accommodation, you will need to set up accounts to pay for utility bills. These can include:

- Your electricity supply.
- Your gas supply (if you have one).
- Council tax.
- Contents insurance.

You can find out more about what's needed from these utility accounts on the [mygov.scot website](#). You should not have to pay to insure the building, that is the landlord's responsibility, but you are responsible for insuring your contents. It is not a legal requirement to have contents insurance, but if your possessions are stolen or damaged contents insurance may help to replace them.

You should also take photographs of your electricity, gas and water meters, and do make sure the readings are clearly visible to avoid being charged for any usage before you moved in. When you get your bills check the meter readings against the bill and let the supplier know if they don't match.

Find out more about your rights renting your home, please visit [Shelter Scotland](#).

## Banks and financial matters

### Where does my salary go?

The minimum salary requirement to make any role eligible for the Health and Care Visa (for overseas workers) is £20,960, although you may be offered more than this. Although £20,960 may seem like a large amount, it can quickly disappear as the bills start to come in. For example, a salary of £20,960 will give you a monthly salary, before any deductions, of £1,746, but in the table of example costs below you will see that this quickly disappears.

This example is based on a single individual living in an urban area, costs will vary depending on your personal circumstances and location. You can learn more about each of these expenses by watching this short video '[Where does my salary go?](#)'.

Example monthly salary

Deduction	Amount
<b>Monthly salary</b>	<b>£1,746</b>
<b>Pension (5%)</b>	£61
<b><a href="#">Income Tax</a></b> (mandatory deduction)	£126
<b><a href="#">National Insurance</a></b> (mandatory deduction)	£84
<b>Accommodation (rent)</b>	£700
<b>Groceries (food etc)</b>	£200
<b>Council tax</b>	£108
<b>Gas and electricity</b>	£55
<b>Wi-Fi</b>	£30
<b>TV licence</b>	£13
<b>Mobile phone</b>	£10
<b>Home contents insurance</b>	£10
<b>Total deductions and expenses</b>	<b>£1397.00</b>
<b>Remaining monthly salary</b>	<b>£349</b>

## Choosing a bank account



There are many different types of financial institutions to choose from, including high street banks, building societies and the Post Office, all offering different accounts, so it is very important to make sure you get the right one for you. There are many online comparison sites available to help you choose, including [MoneySavingExpert](#), [MoneySupermarket](#) and [Compare the](#)

[Market](#).

'It is not a legal requirement to have a UK bank account, but it will make your life difficult if you do not...'

You are most likely to need an account for your employer to pay your salary into, as well as for you to be able to pay bills, such as for your gas and electricity. You may also find that if you want to buy or rent a property then some mortgage lenders and property agents will require you to have a bank account.

If you have a poor credit rating, or don't have any credit history, then there are still some banks that will offer a very basic account. If you already have an account with an overseas bank then you may be able to continue to use that account, although this may incur more costs. However, your existing bank may be able to help you open a UK account if they have an agreement with a UK partner so it may be worth asking.

Alternatively, you may be able to open an account specifically for overseas residents, which would allow you to open your account ahead of your move to the UK but beware of any additional charges that this may incur.

There are three main types of bank account to consider, which can be opened either jointly with other people (normally a spouse or partner) or individually:

- A **current account** is the most common type of account and will allow you to receive wages, pay your bills and pay for shopping. You can find current accounts that are free to operate, although some premium accounts come with a monthly fee in exchange for a variety of perks and benefits. With the current account you will receive a debit card, that should allow you to make contactless payments, and possibly the option for a credit card, loan or overdraft.
- A **basic account** is generally free and is for people with a poor or non-existent credit rating. These accounts offer very basic services but will allow you to receive wages and pay bills as well as providing a debit card but won't provide any credit facilities.
- A **savings account** may technically offer a slightly higher rate of interest than a current account, but that may be conditional on minimum payments and account balances. If you look around, you may well find a current account that provides an introductory rate of interest on account balances that is higher than most formal savings accounts.

## Opening a bank account



If you are already in the UK then you can open a bank account online or by going into any High Street bank, although some smaller branches may ask you to make an appointment. You will normally need a UK address and will be asked to complete an application form and submit to a credit check (unless you are opening a basic account). You will need to provide proof of identity and address, regardless of the type of account you wish to open, and each bank will have its own requirements in terms of the documents that they will accept. In general, you will be asked to provide one or more of these:

- Passport or photo ID.
- A utility bill (less than 3 months old) or council tax bill.
- A recent bank or credit card statement.
- Proof of studying in the UK (if applying for a student account).
- Proof of employment.

If you are applying online, it may be possible to send a scanned copy of documents.

Your application to open a bank account can be refused, perhaps because you failed the credit check or didn't provide the right documents, but the bank doesn't need to say why. If you think you were discriminated against because of your gender, ethnicity, sexuality, age, religion or disability then you can make a complaint to the [Financial Ombudsman Service](#).

If you are a refugee, you can find out more about how to open a bank account and documents needed in the Refugee Council's [Banking for Refugees](#). This guide is available in English, Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, Pashto and Tigrinya.

If you are an asylum seeker, you may find that opening a bank account is difficult in the first instance as you may not have all the documents needed. Banks ask for proof of address, identity documents and immigration status. Some banks may not accept Application Registration Card (ARC) as an identity document and if you are living in hotel accommodation some banks may refuse to accept hotels as a permanent address. Try speaking to different banks to see what they will accept. Sometimes letters of introduction from a charity or other organisation that knows you may be accepted by banks. If you become unemployed and need to go back on Asylum Support, the Home Office may refuse your application if you have salary savings in the bank. We recommend that you speak to your legal adviser about it before taking up employment.

## On-line and mobile banking

UK banks offer on-line banking for their accounts (whether it is a current, basic or savings account), which means that you can use a smart phone, tablet or PC to track your income and spending, to make payments and to make money transfers.

All banks also now offer smartphone apps, which are likely to allow you to make payments and transfer money, as well as check your balance.

## Automated Teller Machine (ATM)/cashpoints



There are many cash machines, also known as cashpoints or ATMs, across the UK. They can be found outside banks and supermarkets, at train and bus stations, petrol stations, Post Offices and many other locations. Most ATMs will accept Cirrus, Maestro and Visa (Plus) cards, which covers most cards issued, but every ATM will display the logo of the card types it accepts.

The newer machines have screens that will display instructions in many languages. Many ATMs do not charge you for withdrawing cash, but some do make a charge between £1.50 and £2 so make sure you check before use.

ATMs have been a target for criminals, so if you see anything suspicious such as something attached that doesn't look right, don't use it. Also, make sure no one is standing close enough to see your Personal Identification Number (PIN) when you are entering it.

There are over 70,000 ATMs in the UK, so to find the closest one to you go online to the [online ATM locator](#).

If you are using a card from an overseas bank account, then ATMs generally offer the best exchange rates. Transactions are calculated using something called the mid-market rate, which is the fairest rate possible. Some may ask you if you wish to be charged in your home currency, but this is very unlikely to be a better rate for you.

## What is National Insurance?

National Insurance (NI) in the UK is the system by which the government collects the money to pay for the funding of state benefits, including the National Health Service (NHS) and state pensions. Everyone aged 16 or over is required to pay national insurance if they are earning over a specified amount, except on the income from pensions, which are exempt.

## National Insurance number

So that the system can ensure that you are paying National Insurance you will need a National Insurance Number, which is made up of both letters and numbers, for example AB918273A. Once allocated to you this number will never change or be allocated to someone else, even if you change your name, get married, divorced or move home. In this way the government can maintain records of the contributions and taxes that you have made or been paid during your entire lifetime.

Your National Insurance Number also gives you access to the NHS and to vote in UK local and general elections.

You can apply for a National Insurance Number once you arrive in the UK and have a postal address and telephone number. You don't need to have your National Insurance Number before you start work, but you should apply for one as soon as possible, if only to avoid paying too much in tax. If you have a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) then you may find that you have already been allocated a National Insurance Number, in which case it will be printed on the back of the card.

If you are not a UK citizen, then you must have the right to work in the UK to apply for a National Insurance Number. Furthermore, you must be resident in the UK so you cannot apply until you have moved. Usually, you will need to apply online and will need one or more of the following documents:

- A passport from any country.
- A Biometric Residence Permit (BRP).
- A national identity card from an EU country or from Norway, Liechtenstein or Switzerland.

If you do not have any of these documents then you can still apply, but it will take a little longer and you may need to attend in person.

If you are an asylum seeker with permission to work, you will need to [apply online](#) or phone 0300 200 3500 for a National Insurance Number once you have received your updated ARC stating permission to work from the Home Office. You may need to attend an appointment in person and show your updated ARC and the Home Office letter.

## Doctors, dentists and medical support

### Emergency medical help

If you or a member of your family are unwell and your GP surgery and pharmacist are closed, phone NHS24 on **111**. NHS24 can provide an [interpreting service](#) if English is not your first or preferred language.



If you need urgent medical attention, then you can go to your nearest [Accident & Emergency \(A&E\) Department](#). If you cannot travel to the hospital yourself, and you need emergency medical attention, then you can phone **999**, this will put you through to an emergency operator who will send an ambulance or paramedic to your location.

## Emergency dental help

If you have a dental emergency during normal working hours, for example a tooth has been knocked out, then you should always ring the dentist that you are registered with first. If you have a dental emergency outside of normal hours, then phone **111**.

If English is not your first or preferred language, then you can still phone **111** as NHS24 uses an [interpretation service](#) to support callers. You can find more details about dealing with dental emergencies on [NHS Inform](#).

## Accessing routine healthcare

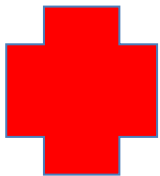
If you've come from overseas to work and live in Scotland, you can get healthcare from the National Health Service (NHS) whilst you are here. There is an [NHS website](#) that provides information on your rights to access healthcare. You can also download a factsheet '[Healthcare for people coming to Scotland to work](#)'.

If you are a refugee or asylum seeker living in Scotland, you have the right to access healthcare from the NHS. You may be asked to show Home Office documents such as an Application Registration Card (ARC), Biometric Residence Permit or Home Office letters. Most healthcare will be free for you. Find more details from the NHS webpage [Healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers](#).

## Immigration health surcharge

The [Immigration Health Surcharge](#) applies to all visitors to the UK who wish to stay for more than 6 months and require a visa to do so. There are exceptions though as you do not need to pay the surcharge if you are applying for a visitor visa, a health and care worker visa or to remain in the UK permanently. At time of writing the cost of this surcharge ranges from £470 to £624 per year, depending on your personal circumstances, and will need to be paid for your spouse and children as well. However, the cost is expected to rise in January 2024 to become £776 to £1,035 a year, depending on your circumstances (health and care worker visa applicants are still exempt).

## Registering with a General Practitioner (doctor)



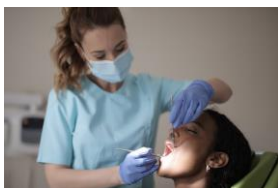
Unless you have a medical emergency then your local General Practitioner (GP) will be your first place to go for medical advice or treatment. Most GPs will work in a medical centre with a few other GPs and practice nurses (a practice nurse can take blood samples and do minor medical procedures). You can find your closest GP at [NHS inform](#) by simply entering your postcode. If you are going to remain in that location for 3 months or more then you can register with them, but if not you can still ask for an appointment as a Temporary Resident.

To register with a GP you'll need to complete a form and then either hand it in or email it to the practice. You may be asked for proof of identification and/or address. The GP practice will then notify you if your registration has been approved or not, if not then you may need to register with a different GP practice. If you have problems finding a GP who is accepting new patients in your area then the registration teams at [National Services Scotland](#) are there to help.

If you need an interpreter, then you can ask the GP to arrange for one for you. When you make the appointment tell the practice what language you would prefer to use.



## Registering with a dentist



You should register with a dentist as soon as possible so that if you have any problems with your teeth, you can access treatment under the NHS. However, it can often be difficult to find a dentist locally that is taking on new NHS patients, so you may need to be prepared to travel further or register as a private patient, which is more expensive.

Once a dentist has accepted you as a new patient, you'll need to provide some information and sign a registration form. They will normally ask you to make an appointment for your first check-up, so they can see if you have any existing problems that may need to be treated. You should then have check-ups every 6 months.

An NHS dentist will be able to offer you most routine treatments, but cosmetic treatments will usually need to be paid for privately. Unless you are exempt NHS patients are normally charged 80% of the treatment cost. NHS treatment is free for everyone aged under 26, pregnant women, nursing mothers in their first year and those with certified exemption due to income.

## Pharmacy services

NHS Pharmacy First Scotland is an NHS service provided by your local community pharmacy. If you have a minor illness, a pharmacy is the first place you should go for advice. You do not usually need an appointment and you can go to any pharmacy.

Your local pharmacist or a trained member of the pharmacy team will give you advice and provide medicine if needed. They may need to refer you to another healthcare professional such as your GP practice, dentist, optometrist or another NHS service if they feel your condition needs further investigation or more specialist care.

To find your local pharmacy use the [NHS Inform Service Directory](#).

## Education

The local authority has a legal responsibility to provide free full-time education for any child aged between 5 and 18. This also applies to a child who is temporarily living in the area, for example children of overseas workers, refugees and asylum seekers.

## Pre-school, nurseries and childcare



When your child is aged between 3 and 4, you can get 1,140 hours of free early learning and childcare a year; this is around 30 hours a week in term time. If you are studying or working, and you have a child aged 3 to 4 years old, you can get help from the government to pay for any type of 'registered' childcare. You can find more information about these schemes on the [Scottish Government website](#).

Funded early learning and childcare is also available for 2-year old children in certain situations:

- If you or child have experience of care.
- If you are in receipt of certain benefits.

If your child has any additional needs, contact the local authority to discuss your options. Your child could be given priority in the allocation of an early learning and childcare place and may be allowed to stay on at pre-school early learning and childcare after their fifth birthday.

Find out about childcare support in Scottish Government's website: [Funded early learning and childcare](#).

## Primary and secondary schools



Every child has a right to a free place at primary school which starts from age 4 to 5, but which school they will go to is determined by the local authority based upon the catchment area of the schools in your area. If you want your child to go to school outside the catchment area, then you will need to make a request to the local authority, but success will depend on whether there are any spaces available.

All children in primary 1 to 5 at a local authority school are entitled to free school meals and after Primary 5 if their family is experiencing financial hardship. Local authorities will also usually provide free transport if the child lives outside of a town or city and beyond a reasonable walking distance (2-3 miles). If you have requested a school place outside your catchment area it is unlikely free transport will be provided. You can find more information about help with school costs from [Citizens' Advice \(Scotland\)](#).



In Scotland children will move after 7 years in primary school to secondary education at the age of 11 or 12. Places at secondary school are also allocated according to catchment area. You can make a placement request for another school, but this will depend on the other school having places. Generally, they will go to the same secondary school as their classmates from primary school, although there are sometimes options to choose a Roman Catholic school. You will need to contact the [local council](#) of the area you are moving to so that you can be allocated a school place.

All children will take exams, usually in year 4, these are called National 4 or 5. Pupils would then remain at their secondary school until they have reached the age of 16 - 18, if staying to take Higher and Advanced Higher exams.

[Parent Zone](#) and [Education Scotland](#) have useful information on the Scottish education system for parents, carers and children. You can also find useful information at the Educational Institute for Scotland links below:

- The [Parents/Carers Guide](#) has information for parents and carers about school education in Scotland.
- [Welcome to Scotland: Going to School in Scotland](#) has information for children and young people about going to school in Scotland.

## Colleges

Colleges are not the same as universities, although they can offer courses at degree level, as they take students from the age of 16 and offer vocational (work-based) studies. Colleges do also offer courses that are a progression to university. You can find more information on the [Colleges in Scotland](#) website.

All courses are aligned to [Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework](#) (SCQF) levels.

If you are an asylum seeker you and your dependents will be eligible to study full time and part time ESOL courses. You will also be eligible to study part time 'advanced' and 'non advanced' courses subject to meeting other funding criteria.

If you have refugee status, you are eligible to college education the same as any other Scottish residents.

If you are studying an advanced course that is SCQF level 7 (Higher National Certificate - HNC) or SCQF level 8 (Higher National Diploma - HND), and you are a resident in Scotland, including refugees, you are entitled to apply to [Student Awards Agency Scotland \(SAAS\)](#) for a bursary, tuition fees and cost of living loan.

If you want to find out whether you are eligible for funding, speak with a student adviser to find out more.

## Universities



Scotland's 19 universities offer over 4,500 courses in more than 150 subject groupings. Studying for an undergraduate degree at a Scottish university will take 3 to 4 years.

Undergraduate courses generally start in September each year and are open for applications a year in advance (between September and January). Post-graduate course start dates will vary, please check on the university's website for application deadlines. Applications need to be made via [UCAS](#) (University and Colleges Admissions Service).

If you are an adult asylum seeker you will be treated as overseas student. Or you may be treated as a home student at the discretion of the Scottish University. Many universities offer sanctuary scholarships, and you can find those opportunities at [Student Action for Refugees](#).

If you are resident in Scotland including refugees, then you can claim most, if not all, of the cost of tuition from the [Student Awards Agency Scotland \(SAAS\)](#). Speak with a student adviser to find out more and how to apply if you are eligible.

To find out more about Scottish universities and studying in Scotland visit the [About Scotland](#) website or view their [on-line guide](#) to Scotland's 19 world-class universities.

## Children of asylum seekers accessing further and higher education

Children of asylum seekers can continue to access further and higher education (HNC/HND and university degrees) as a home student and can apply to the [Student Awards Agency Scotland \(SAAS\)](#) for a grant to pay for their tuition fees only. If you are not sure about eligibility for SAAS funding or have other enquiries, you can contact [SAAS](#).

Find out more about your right to study in Scotland: [Access to Education Factsheet July 2023 \(justrightscotland.org.uk\)](#).

## Travelling in the UK

### Driving licence



In the UK you must have a valid driving licence to be able to drive a car, motorcycle, van or other motorised vehicle. If you have a driving licence from your home country, or an International Driving Permit, then you can use that for 12 months from the day you entered the UK. After that you will need a UK driving

licence, but to get one you'll need to be able to prove that you have been living in the UK for 185 days within the past 12 months.

If you have a licence to drive vehicles with a manual gearbox, then you can also drive cars with an automatic gearbox. However, if your licence is for automatic cars only, then you will need to take a further test to be able to drive cars with a manual gearbox.

If your driving licence is from a country outside of the [designated countries list](#) then after 12 months you will need to pass a UK driving test. To do so, the first step is to apply for a provisional British licence on the [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency](#) website.

## Driving lessons

You can learn how to drive a car on public roads when you are 17, but you must have a provisional licence before you start. You must be supervised when you're learning to drive a car. This can be by a [driving instructor](#) or someone else who meets the rules, for example [family or friends](#) as long as they are over 21, and have had a full licence for at least 3 years for the type of vehicle you're learning in.

Insurance is a legal requirement in the UK and you MUST ensure that you have appropriate insurance cover. This could be your own policy, or you might be covered on the insurance of the owner of the car, but you must check. More details on insurance can be found in the [Insurance](#) section below.



While you are learning to drive, the car you are driving must display an L plate (red L on a white background) on both the front and rear of the car. As a learner driver, you must be accompanied by a qualified driver at all times.

## Driving test



To get a UK driving licence you must pass a theory test before taking the driving test itself. You also need to have lived in the UK for at least 185 days in the last 12 months. You can find more details and book your theory test on the [Gov.UK website](#). A theory test will cost £23 at time of publication.

You can find more details and book your driving test on the '[Book your driving test](#)' page of the GOV.UK website. At time of publication a driving test will normally cost between £62-£75.

## Rules of the road

This guide cannot list all the rules for driving in the UK, so for a complete list go to [The Highway Code](#) or buy a hard copy from most bookstores.



Some of the most essential driving rules and regulations are:

- Always drive on the left-hand side of the road.
- Do not use and block the middle lane if the inside lane is clear.
- When approaching a roundabout, give priority to traffic approaching from the right, unless otherwise indicated.
- All speed limits, traffic signals and road signs must be obeyed.
- All vehicles must give way to emergency services vehicles (with blue flashing lights) in a safe way.
- You cannot hold your phone when behind the wheel, even momentarily, you must have hands-free access.
- You and all passengers must wear a seatbelt.
- You must not drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- The minimum driving age is 17.
- The vehicle must have an MOT if over 3 years old.

## Insurance

It is a legal requirement for all vehicles and drivers on UK roads to have adequate insurance in place. There are many insurance providers, so it is very important to compare costs carefully before taking any policy. There are also different types of insurance, the main ones being:

- **Third party only.** This is the minimum required legally and it is also the cheapest. However, it is very limited in what it will cover and will not pay out anything towards the cost of repair or replacement of your own vehicle, only for other vehicles that may have also been damaged if it was your fault.
- **Third party + fire and theft.** This policy would cover the cost of other vehicles if you were to blame for any damage, and it would also cover costs if your vehicle was stolen or was damaged by fire.
- **Fully comprehensive.** These policies cover your vehicle and any other vehicle you could be blamed for damaging. It is important though to read the small print to make sure you understand what exceptions there may be as 'fully' doesn't always mean everything.

The easiest way to find the right policy for you is to use one of the many comparison websites available.

## Public transport in the UK

The efficiency of public transport across Scotland is generally quite good, although availability of services will vary from one region to another. If you live in a large town or city then you can expect buses to be regular and frequent, in remote areas the service will be more sporadic.

Many larger towns can also be accessed by train. However, although train travel is often quicker than bus, it is often more expensive.

In Scotland, we have a [National Entitlement Card](#) which offers free access to many public transport services across the country. This is also referred to as a bus pass (for people 60+ or with a disability), or [Young Scot](#) card (for those aged 11 to 26) which allows free bus travel if under 22 and includes other discounts and benefits).

[The Traveline Scotland app](#) provides information and timetables for all types of public transport in Scotland.

## Buses

You can get almost anywhere by bus in Scotland, and they are generally cheaper than trains, although they are slower, make more stops and are vulnerable to traffic and roadworks. The two largest bus operators are [Citylink](#) and [Stagecoach](#), who both have apps and websites, and can also be found on the Moovit app on [Android](#) and [iPhone](#).

You can purchase tickets in advance for your bus travel, but unlike the trains it can be cheaper to buy your tickets on the bus itself. Most buses now accept contactless payment, but having some cash for when technology fails is always a good idea.

## Trains

The best place to find train times and prices is online. The [Scotrail webpage](#) is great for finding the right train and booking in advance but you can also download their app on [Android](#) and [iPhone](#). As with many other things, the further in advance you can book the cheaper the price is likely to be. You can also obtain a [Scotrail Smartcard](#), which you can download tickets to and avoid queueing. When you do book in advance then you are likely to have the option to print out the ticket at home, but if you don't have a printer then you can collect them at the station or, if you have enough time, have them posted to you. If you collect them from the station, remember to take the booking code and the card you paid with, or you won't be able to collect your ticket.

If you can't buy in advance then you can purchase tickets at the station, either from a ticket machine or from a human being at the ticket office but be prepared to pay more.

You must buy a ticket before you board the train, or risk getting a penalty fare. Only undiscounted full price tickets are available from the conductor after you have boarded the train.

If you have some flexibility over the time of day you need to travel then try to avoid the peak times, as these are the busiest, and most expensive, times to travel. Off-peak times are usually for journeys starting after 09:15 on weekdays and at any time at the weekend or a public holiday.

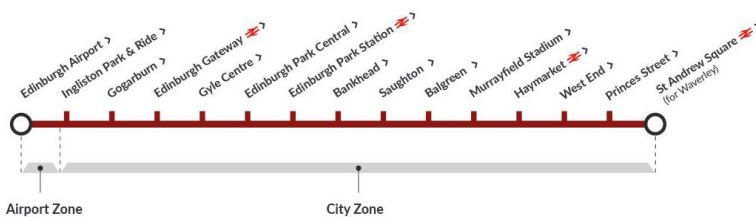
## Glasgow subway



The [Glasgow Subway](#) is an underground light metro system.

The Subway is open 06:30 to 23:40 Monday to Saturday and 10:00 to 18:12 on Sundays. The fifteen stations of the Subway are distributed over a 10 km circuit of the West End and City Centre of Glasgow, with eight stations to the North of the River Clyde and seven to the South. There are two lines: an outer circle running clockwise and an inner circle running anticlockwise.

## Edinburgh tram



The [Edinburgh tram](#) system is a 14-kilometre line between St Andrew Square in the New Town and Edinburgh Airport, with 15 stops.

The first tram of the day leaves at 05:30 from St Andrew Square and at 06:18 from the airport. The last trams of the day leave at 22:48 from the airport and at 23:30 from St Andrews Square. Trams then run every 7 minutes between 7am and 7pm and every 10 minutes out with those times. There are ticket machines at every stop.

## Local information

The following are suggestions of local information your employer could provide you that is specific to your organization and location.



## Local community support

Employers may be able to provide details of community support or ethnic associations that are relevant for you as a new employee. Many local authorities also provide details of ethnic minority communities, associations or groups in their area, so this is a good place to start looking. Your local library is also always a good source of local information.

## Local facilities available

There are local facilities that we all use, such as banks, supermarkets and other shops. Your employer may be able to provide details for local doctors, dentists and opticians as well as the nearest hospital accident and emergency department. They may also be able to include details of libraries and laundromats, as well as chemists and cafes. You can also do an online search for these facilities, for example "what doctors are near me".

## Finding employment for family members

Your employer may be able to offer employment for partners or be able to assist them finding employment elsewhere either through their network of contacts or providing advice on where to look. You can also direct them to some of the most popular employment sites which include:

- General job search websites:
  - <https://www.s1jobs.com/>.
  - <https://uk.indeed.com/>.
- Charitable/voluntary sector (Non-Government Organisations):
  - <https://goodmoves.com/>.
- Local authority councils (e.g. education, culture and sport, parks, construction and maintenance etc):
  - <https://www.myjobscotland.gov.uk/>.
- Colleges and universities:
  - <https://www.jobs.ac.uk/>.
- NHS Scotland:
  - <https://jobs.scot.nhs.uk/>.
- Civil service (Government jobs e.g. DWP, HMRC, Home Office - restricted to British, commonwealth citizens, EEA nationals):
  - <https://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/index.cgi>.
- Recruitment agencies (third party agency who recruit on behalf of employers):
  - <https://www.agencycentral.co.uk/>.

## Spiritual wellbeing

Part of looking after the whole individual means considering your spiritual wellbeing. Historically, spiritual care has been associated with religion and religious practices. More recently, spiritual care is seen to encompass all aspects relating to the human experience and the various circumstances of living, irrespective of faith, belief, or ideology. [Spiritual care](#) facilitates a connection that brings you meaning, purpose, significance and hope in times of change, coping with challenges, and finding your identity as an individual working or supporting clients in adult social care. It helps you affirm your values and the things that are important to you in your work and as an individual.

As an overseas worker, refugee or asylum seeker going into employment in Scotland, you are encouraged to maintain your spiritual wellbeing. This means consideration for, and promotion of, those values and practices that enable you to connect with your inner self, build resilience and give you meaning, purpose and hope. Religious practices, meditation, art, being around nature- green spaces and even spending time with friends and family (physically or virtually) are some of the ways through which you can maintain your spiritual wellbeing.

An employer may be able to provide location and contact details for appropriate places of worship in your locality. A faith community will often provide support to individuals and families who have recently arrived in an area. In addition, cultural food stores serve as a helpful resource when looking for places to practice religious rituals or make connections with people of similar interest.

## Glossary of Terms

**Advanced courses:** Courses which are usually an SCQF level 7 (Higher National Certificate) to level 8 (Higher National Diploma).

**Application Registration Card (ARC):** A credit card-sized plastic card issued by the Home Office to individuals who claim asylum. It contains information about the holder's identity, or claimed identity, although it is not evidence of identity.

**Asylum seeker:** A person who has left their home country as they are unable to live there safely because they fear persecution and are seeking asylum in another.

**Biometric Residence Permit (BRP):** A permit to reside in the UK that can be used to confirm your identity, right to study and right to public services and benefits.

**Cover letter:** A cover letter accompanies and compliments your CV or application form. It is a way of introducing yourself in a more personal way.

**Curriculum Vitae (CV):** A written overview of your skills, education and work experience.

**Discretionary leave to remain:** Discretionary leave to remain is permission, granted by UKVI outside of the usual immigration rules, for an individual to remain in the UK.

**Employee Assistance Programme (EAP):** An EAP generally offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counselling, referrals and follow-up services.

**Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS):** A fee that UK visa applicants (except Health & Care Worker visa applicants) must pay to access NHS services.

**Migrants:** Individuals who face no impediment to safely returning to their home country and who continue to receive the protection of their government.

**Modern slavery:** The recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, women or men through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation. In the UK it is a crime (Modern Slavery Act 2015) and includes holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude forced or compulsory labour, or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after.

**National Insurance (NI):** This is a tax on earnings that pays for some state benefits, such as the state pension.

**Non-advanced courses:** Courses which are usually SCQF level 4 to 6.

**Overseas worker:** People who work in a country other than the one of which they are a citizen.

**Refugee:** Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion.

**Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF):** Scotland's national qualification framework which is recognised and used by secondary education, colleges, universities, and employers.

**Social care worker:** Care workers and home carers attend to the personal needs and comforts of adults with care and support needs within residential care establishments, day care establishments or in their own homes.

**Social worker:** Social worker is a protected title, you must hold a recognised social work qualification and be registered as a social worker with SSSC. Social workers provide information, advice and support to those who are socially excluded or are experiencing crisis; they protect the welfare of vulnerable groups including children, young people, people with disabilities, elderly people and people who are mentally or physically ill, and they may specialise in specific areas of work.

**Spiritual care:** Spiritual care supports an important dimension of the human experience which recognises a part of an individual that seeks to make connections which bring meaning, purpose and significance to you. It is these connections that brings a sense of hope and willingness to carrying on despite the situations we experience in life. The Scottish Government have provided a strategy in the form of a national framework to support the direction of Spiritual care in health and social care in Scotland and this is available on the Scottish Government website.

**Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS):** Supports eligible Scottish students by paying their tuition fees, as well as offering bursaries and living cost loans.

This guide has been jointly produced by:



The Centre for Workforce Supply Social Care team is running a project focused on testing the feasibility of international recruitment into adult social care in Scotland.

The aim is to support the recovery, growth and transformation of the Scottish social care workforce, ensuring the sector has the right people, in the right place at the right time.

Contact us at: [nes.cwssocial@nhs.scot](mailto:nes.cwssocial@nhs.scot)

The Scottish Refugee Council is Scotland's national refugee charity.

We provide direct support and advice to people rebuilding their lives in Scotland.

We stand up for people's rights and campaign for a more fair and humane asylum system and enhanced integration in Scotland.

Together, we can build a better future with refugees in Scotland.

Tel: 0141 248 9799

[Contact us webpage](#)

Web: [www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)



The Scottish Social Services Council is the regulator for the social work, social care and children and young people workforce in Scotland. Our work means the people of Scotland can count on social services being provided by a trusted, skilled, confident and valued workforce.

We protect the public by registering this workforce, setting standards for their practice, conduct, training, and education and by supporting their professional development. Where people fall below the standards of practice and conduct, we can investigate and take action.

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