

Role title	Immigration Lead	Grade	
Reports to	People Director	Location	Central Support Office, Darlington
Job family	People	Hours	40
Role Purpose			
HC-One Group operates a network of care homes across England, Scotland and Wales, delivering person-centred, compassionate, and safe care. Our mission is to enhance residents' lives, support our people, and drive continuous improvement through strong leadership, innovation, and values-led decision-making. The Immigration Lead is a specialist role within the People Directorate, responsible for managing all aspects of HC-One's immigration and sponsorship licence compliance across the Group. Reporting directly to the People Director, the postholder is the Group's subject matter expert on UK immigration law and UKVI (UK Visas and Immigration) requirements — ensuring HC-One's sponsorship licence obligations are fully met, that international recruits are supported through the visa and right-to-work process, and that the Group is protected from the significant financial and reputational risks that immigration non-compliance can carry. HC-One recruits internationally to help meet the staffing demands of a large and growing care portfolio, and immigration compliance is therefore a business-critical function. The Immigration Lead works closely with the Head of Talent & Recruitment, Regional Recruiters, Onboarding team, HR Advisors, and external legal advisers to ensure that every stage of the international recruitment and employment journey — from visa application through to ongoing worker monitoring and licence audit readiness — is managed accurately, compliantly, and with genuine care for the individuals involved.			
Main Activities			

Duties and Responsibilities

Sponsorship Licence Management

- Act as the Group's primary point of responsibility for the management and maintenance of HC-One's UKVI sponsorship licence, ensuring the licence remains in good standing and that all obligations are met at all times.
- Fulfil the duties of a key contact and/or authorising officer on the sponsorship licence as required, maintaining a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the responsibilities this carries under UKVI requirements.
- Ensure the Group's sponsorship management system (SMS) is accurately maintained, including the timely assignment of Certificates of Sponsorship (CoS), updating of worker records, and reporting of any changes in sponsored worker circumstances to UKVI within required timescales.
- Monitor licence compliance on an ongoing basis, conducting regular internal audits of sponsored worker records and right-to-work documentation to ensure the Group is consistently audit-ready.
- Manage any UKVI compliance visits or audits, preparing documentation, briefing relevant colleagues, and liaising with legal advisers to ensure the Group presents a strong and well-evidenced compliance position.
- Ensure the sponsorship licence is renewed in a timely manner and that any changes to the licence — including additions of roles, changes to licence holders, or upgrades — are managed correctly and promptly.

Visa Applications & Certificate of Sponsorship

- Manage the end-to-end process for Skilled Worker visa applications and Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) assignments for all international recruits across the Group, ensuring applications are accurate, complete, and submitted within required timescales.
- Assess the eligibility of roles and candidates for sponsorship under the Skilled Worker route, ensuring salary thresholds, occupation code requirements, and other UKVI criteria are met before a CoS is assigned.
- Liaise with candidates, hiring managers, Regional Recruiters, and external immigration legal advisers throughout the visa application process, providing clear guidance on requirements, timelines, and next steps.
- Support international recruits in understanding the visa application process, the documents they need to provide, and what to expect at each stage, ensuring they feel informed and supported throughout.
- Monitor visa application progress and expiry dates across the sponsored worker population, maintaining an accurate tracker and proactively initiating renewal or extension processes well in advance of expiry.

Right-to-Work Compliance

- Oversee right-to-work compliance for all sponsored and international workers across the Group, ensuring checks are conducted correctly, documented accurately, and repeated at the appropriate intervals for time-limited permissions.
- Work closely with the Onboarding team and HR Advisors to ensure right-to-work processes for all worker types — including British, EEA settled status, and sponsored workers — are applied correctly and consistently across all homes and central functions.
- Maintain a comprehensive right-to-work tracker for all workers with time-limited permissions, proactively flagging upcoming expiries to the relevant HR Advisor and Home Manager to ensure repeat checks and any necessary visa actions are completed on time.
- Advise the Head of Talent & Recruitment and Onboarding team on right-to-work requirements for specific candidate types, ensuring the recruitment and onboarding process reflects current Home Office requirements.
- Escalate any right-to-work concerns, potential illegal working risks, or suspected document irregularities to the People Director and, where appropriate, legal advisers immediately, in line with HC-One's legal obligations.

Sponsored Worker Monitoring & Reporting Duties

- Fulfil the Group's ongoing sponsored worker monitoring obligations under UKVI requirements, including tracking attendance, reporting changes in worker circumstances, and notifying UKVI of any relevant events — such as a worker failing to report for work, changing roles, or leaving the organisation — within the required reporting window.

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all sponsored workers, including their visa status, CoS details, passport and visa document copies, and any changes to their employment terms that may affect their sponsored status.
- Work with Home Managers, HR Advisors, and the People Director to ensure that any changes to a sponsored worker's role, hours, salary, or location are assessed for immigration implications before being implemented, and that UKVI is notified where required.
- Ensure sponsored workers are clearly informed of their own obligations under their visa conditions, including restrictions on additional employment, and that any concerns about compliance with visa conditions are escalated promptly.

International Recruitment Support

- Work closely with the Head of Talent & Recruitment and Regional Recruiters to support international recruitment campaigns, providing immigration expertise at the candidate attraction, selection, and pre-employment stages.
- Advise on the immigration implications of planned international recruitment activity, including the availability of appropriate occupation codes, salary threshold requirements, and the lead times involved in sponsorship and visa processing.
- Support the development of clear candidate-facing information and guidance materials on the Skilled Worker visa process, ensuring international recruits receive accurate, accessible, and reassuring information about what their journey to working in the UK will involve.
- Liaise with the Onboarding team to ensure that the onboarding process for internationally recruited workers is appropriately tailored, with additional support, clear communication, and well-coordinated pre-arrival arrangements where applicable.

Policy, Training & Internal Knowledge

- Develop and maintain HC-One's immigration policies, procedures, and guidance documents, ensuring they are accurate, up to date, and clearly written for both HR and operational audiences.
- Provide training and guidance to HR Advisors, Onboarding Clerks, Regional Recruiters, and Home Administrators on right-to-work requirements, sponsorship obligations, and immigration compliance — building awareness and capability across the teams whose day-to-day work intersects with immigration compliance.
- Stay current with all changes to UK immigration law, UKVI guidance, Home Office policy, and case law that affect the Group's sponsorship obligations or right-to-work requirements, assessing implications and updating internal processes accordingly.
- Work with external immigration legal advisers to seek expert input on complex cases, novel situations, or areas of legal uncertainty, managing those relationships effectively and ensuring advice is appropriately acted upon.

Audit Readiness & Risk Management

- Maintain the Group's immigration compliance records to a standard that is always audit-ready, ensuring that all sponsored worker files, CoS documentation, right-to-work records, and SMS entries would withstand scrutiny in a UKVI compliance visit.
- Conduct regular internal immigration audits across the Group, identifying gaps, errors, or risks in sponsored worker records or right-to-work documentation and working with relevant teams to resolve them promptly.
- Maintain the Group's immigration risk register, proactively identifying and escalating risks to the People Director and taking action to mitigate them before they crystallise.
- Ensure the People Director is kept fully informed of the Group's immigration compliance position, any emerging risks, and any interactions with UKVI, providing clear and timely reporting on all material immigration matters.

Stakeholder Engagement & Corporate Contribution

- Build strong working relationships with the People Director, Head of Talent & Recruitment, HR Manager, HR Advisors, Onboarding team, and Regional Recruiters, acting as the accessible and trusted immigration expert across the People Directorate.
- Engage with Home Managers and operational teams as needed on immigration matters affecting their sponsored workers, providing clear, practical guidance that enables operational decisions to be made with confidence.

- Uphold and model HC-One's core values of Quality, Innovation, Compassion, Integrity, and Respect in all aspects of the role, including in the care and sensitivity with which international recruits are supported through the visa and onboarding process.

The following applies to all Colleagues:

You are expected to comply with HC Ones policies and procedures for health, safety and hygiene at all times. When attending HC-One homes all colleagues should ensure they comply with infection and control processes as outlined in the HC One infection and control procedures available on the Group intranet.

You may be required to undertake other duties appropriate to your post and/or hours of work. The company may periodically review your role profile and update it to ensure it relates to the job being performed. It is the company's aim to reach agreement on reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible the company reserves the right to insist on changes to your role description, after consultation.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and therefore it is important that you are able to recognise the signs which may indicate possible abuse, harm or neglect in its different forms and know what to do if there are any concerns. All colleagues are required to attend safeguarding training appropriate to their role and to undertake additional training in associated areas. You also have the ability to seek appropriate advice and report concerns, including escalation if action is not taken.

Kindness the HC-One Way

To help us understand how we need to show up to provide the kindest possible care, we have identified 5 Qualities. These are the qualities we know we can coach, support, and develop in ourselves and each other so we can support those we care for to live their best life.

We are CURIOUS: We ask questions, look for clues, and seek to understand.

We are COMPASSIONATE: We try to walk in the shoes of others to understand how we can best support them.

We are CREATIVE: We use imagination to make things happen yet remain practical.

We are COURAGEOUS: We support people to live the life they want without shying away from managing the risks that go with that.

We can be COUNTED ON: We always look for ways to be there and support those in need.

Qualifications and Skills Required

	Essential	Desirable
--	-----------	-----------

Qualifications and Knowledge	• Sound knowledge of right-to-work legislation and Home Office guidance, with experience of applying right-to-work requirements correctly across a range of worker types including British nationals, EEA settled status holders, and visa holders.	• A relevant qualification in immigration law, HR, or a related discipline — such as an OISC Level 1 or 2 accreditation, a CIPD qualification, or a law degree; candidates who can demonstrate equivalent practical immigration compliance experience will also be considered.
• Knowledge of sponsorship and immigration processes. Skills	• Excellent organisational and prioritisation skills, with the ability to manage a varied and time-sensitive workload across multiple ongoing visa cases and compliance obligations simultaneously.	
Experience	• Demonstrable experience in an immigration compliance, sponsorship management, or right-to-work role, with a thorough working knowledge of the UK Skilled Worker visa route, UKVI sponsorship licence requirements, and the obligations of a licenced sponsor.	• Experience of working with external immigration legal advisers and managing those relationships effectively.
• Experience of managing recruitment KPIs. • Experience leading continuous improvement initiatives. Personal Attributes	• Strong attention to detail and a rigorous, methodical approach to compliance administration, with the ability to maintain accurate records and identify and resolve compliance risks proactively.	
Financial Accountabilities	Risk Accountabilities	Headcount Responsibility
Examples below: • Budget • Sign off level • Total Sales revenue responsibility • Value of contracts managed	The type and scope of risk if this role is not done effectively, examples: • Financial regulation breaches resulted in fines • Employment law • Health and safety of individual residents/ all residents/ colleagues across the group • Breach of contract supplier/ employee • Environmental • Reputational	Direct: Indirect:
Special Features		
• Disclosure and Barring Service – you will be required to complete an Enhanced DBS disclosure.		
• You will be required to comply with a DVLA licence check for compliance with HC-One insurance policies. • This role is based at the Central Support Office in Darlington, with occasional travel to homes and regional offices across the Group's portfolio as required.		



Confidentiality
You may not disclose any information of a confidential nature relating to the employer or in respect of which the employer has an obligation of confidence to any third party other than where you are obliged to disclose such information in the proper course of your employment or as required by law.