You may have heard that the government is introducing an additional four months on Skilled Worker visas for GPs at the end of their training. This is intended to allow you to have extra time to secure work with an employer and arrange sponsorship with them.

You do not need to do anything now. We are contacting you as we believe you will be eligible for this special extension should you need it (please check the ‘eligibility’ below). This is an optional offer that you will not have to take up if you do not need to. You also do not need to make a decision until near the end of your training.

If you think you might be interested in taking up this offer now or in the future, please read the information below carefully.

**Please ensure you retain this information in your records as you may need to refer to it when your training ends.**

***Background***

Within the ‘[Delivery plan for recovering access to primary care’](https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/delivery-plan-for-recovering-access-to-primary-care-2/%29) published in May 2023, NHS England confirmed “*Working with the Home Office, from autumn 2023 government will introduce an additional four months at the end of a visa for newly trained GPs to remain in the UK and NHS England will continue to increase the number of GP surgeries holding visa sponsorship licences.”*

Following review with the Home Office we can now confirm the details of how the scheme will be implemented.

***Eligibility***

The Home Office has confirmed this scheme will apply to GPs completing their training with Skilled Worker visas expiring from June 2023 onwards.

Please be aware that this scheme will **not** apply to other training specialties, any Skilled Worker visas expiring before June 2023, or any other visa type.

***Who should/shouldn’t apply?***

It will be your decision about whether you should apply for the additional four months at the end of your visa.

Please be aware that this is not an alternative to securing sponsorship with your next employer after completing your training and you will not be given a new visa. This scheme is only to allow you to legally remain in the UK while you are looking for employment and waiting to start work.

If you have already secured employment and sponsorship with a new sponsor by the end of your training, you will not need to apply.

If you have a new immigration status by the end of your training (for example ILR), you will not need to apply.

On completion of the MS Forms (noted below), NHS England will provide confirmation to the Home Office that you are eligible for this extension and that you have made an application.

If you do apply and your application is successful, the additional four months will be added to the end of your visa, after your CCT date.

***How to apply***

**Please be aware that you cannot apply more than one month before your current visa is due to expire (the end date on your BRP card or visa).** Applications submitted too early will be rejected by the Home Office.

When it is time to apply, please follow the steps below:

1. Make a Skilled Worker Visa application (using the health and care route) for you and any dependants via the UKVI website: <https://www.gov.uk/health-care-worker-visa/extend-your-visa>
	1. Please note you will need to pay the associated visa application fees at this time, but will be refunded later - see point 9
2. As part of this application, you will need to use the Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) number issued to you by NHS England (formerly HEE) for your training – or the most recent one if you’ve had an extension before your CCT date.
	1. Your CoS number is: **<COS NUMBER>**
	2. Our sponsor license number is: **QN9268BN2**
3. Add the start date as the day after your visa expires (i.e. if your BRP is due to expire on 18/08/2023 please add 19/08/2023).
4. Add the end date as your start date plus 4 months (i.e. if your start date is 19/08/2023 the end date will be 18/12/2023).
5. Complete the [**MS Form - 4-month visa extension**](https://forms.office.com/e/t1TWFEju4i) to confirm you have submitted your application, providing application reference numbers (<https://forms.office.com/e/t1TWFEju4i>).
6. The Home Office will then ‘hold’ your application for a period 4 months.  Please note they will not assess your application and you will not be given a decision or a new visa. Your application will just be placed in a holding position so that your stay in the UK will not be curtailed and you will not be asked to leave.
7. When you find a new employer, they will issue you a CoS for you to apply for a further Skilled Worker Visa. You will then need to make an application for a further Skilled Worker visa and any dependants directly with UKVI, with the relevant start and end dates of your new employment and pay the associated fees.
8. Complete the [**MS Form - new CoS number**](https://forms.office.com/e/qmi4FPaWWJ) to confirm you have submitted a further application, providing application reference numbers for you and your dependants (if applicable) (<https://forms.office.com/e/qmi4FPaWWJ>)
9. Once your second application is received, the Home Office will refund the cost of one of the applications directly back to you.

***Can NHS England help?***

The sponsorship team can only help with queries regarding your sponsorship for your training post. Please be aware that NHS England have not set the process outlined above and are therefore not able to amend this or offer further guidance on the process, though we have tried to include some frequently asked questions below.

**Should my dependants apply at the same as me?** Yes. Your dependants should apply at the same as you to extend their visas. If your dependants apply later their applications may not be considered in line with your application and may be refused.

**Will this affect my application for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)?** – No. Any extension taken under this scheme submitted before the expiry date of your visa will extend your permission under Section 3C of the Immigration Act 1971, and this time period within the UK will be counted as Skilled Worker permission for the purposes of calculating eligibility for settlement. Section 3C extends the person’s existing permission until the application is decided (or withdrawn).

**Can I continue my training using the additional four months offered by this scheme? –** No. If your training is extended (i.e., your CCT date is delayed), you will need to apply for a normal extension visa with NHS England.You can then use the additional 4 months post CCT date should you need it (and follow the process above) once you have successfully completed your training.

**Can I undertake locum work during the additional four months offered by this scheme?** Yes. You will be able to work as a locum GP whilst you are seeking permanent employment in the field. However, the purpose of this scheme is to find permanent employment at a Skilled Worker licenced employer.

**Can I travel overseas during the additional four months offered by this scheme?** No. If you were to leave the Common Travel Area (consisting of the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man and Channel Islands) whilst your application is outstanding it will be treated as withdrawn and you will be unable to return the UK.  Any ongoing immigration status you have under Section 3C (see above) will lapse as soon as you leave the UK, even if you remain within another part of the Common Travel Area.  The purpose of this scheme is to allow International Medical Graduate trainee GPs additional time once they have successfully completed their training to find a job in the sector without needing to leave the UK.

If you were to leave the Common Travel Area during this period, you will need to make an application from overseas once you have been offered a job.

**What happens if I change training specialty before my CCT date?** – This scheme is only being offered to those who complete their training in the GP specialty. If you change specialty before this, you will no longer be eligible.

**What happens if I don’t submit a new CoS before the end of the grace period?** Your visa application will be considered on the basis of the information you have already provided and may be refused.

***What should I do now?***

You do not need to do anything now unless your leave is due to expire in the next month (or from 1st June 2023). If you are interested in this scheme and your leave is due to expire within the next month (or from 1st June 2023) then you will need to follow steps 1-9 above. You do not need to respond to this email as your data will be collected from the completed MS Form.

This email is for your information only and includes all the guidance we have. If you have any queries, please contact UKVI directly on UKVINHSTeam@homeoffice.gov.uk

Kind regards

**National Overseas Sponsorship Team**

**NHS England**

**Email:** sponsorship@hee.nhs.uk

**Website:**  <https://medical.hee.nhs.uk/medical-training-recruitment/medical-specialty-training/overseas-applicants>

**Website:**  [www.england.nhs.uk](http://www.england.nhs.uk/)

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