Key Changes to Sponsorship Rules Affecting the Care Sector from July 2025

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On 1 July 2025, the government announced major changes to the Health and Care Worker visa and the way in which care providers are able to sponsor workers. These changes follow the proposals announced in the Immigration White Paper in May this year.

The aim of these new rules is to address concerns over the sponsorship of care workers, but they will consequently have a significant impact on the ability of care providers to meet their staffing requirements in a sector that heavily relies on sponsored workers. With the changes taking effect from 22 July 2025, care providers have been given limited time to put contingency plans in place.

Key Changes to Care Worker Sponsorship Rules:

1. New entrants to Care Worker and Senior Care Worker roles (under SOC codes 6135 and 6136) will no longer be eligible for sponsorship.

2. Visa applications for those already working under those codes prior to 22 July 2025 will still be permitted during a transition period until 22 July 2028. This means it will still be possible for those already working as Care Workers and Senior Care Workers to move to a new sponsor or to apply to renew their visa during that period.

3. During the transition period, it will also be possible to sponsor workers as Care Workers and Senior Care Workers when they are switching from other visa routes, such as a student or graduate visa. However, the individual must have been legally employed by a care provider for at least 3 months before a certificate of sponsorship can be assigned to them.

4. From 22 July 2028, the government intends to remove SOC Codes 6135 and 6136 from the Immigration Salary List or Temporary Shortage List, meaning the relaxed requirements for sponsorship under these routes (notably the significant reduction in the minimum salary threshold from £41,700 to £25,000 per year) will no longer apply. If those codes are also removed as eligible occupations for sponsorship,

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providers will no longer be able to sponsor Care Workers and Senior Care Workers and will need to rely solely on the domestic market for their staffing needs.

5. Due to these changes, there will no longer be a requirement for care providers to engage with the pool of displaced workers, a requirement announced on 9 April 2025, before being able to assign a certificate of sponsorship for a Care Worker or Senior Care Worker.

Unless there is a dramatic change of approach by the Government, care providers should be putting in place contingency plans to operate without being able to rely on international recruits. We are aware that, due to the already significant financial pressures on care providers, these changes are likely to have a major impact on the way care companies operate and may well affect their operational viability.

It is also unclear how these changes will affect the other measures announced in the Immigration White Paper, such as the potential increase in the qualifying period for Indefinite Leave to Remain and citizenship, with sponsored workers in the care sector now facing uncertainty over being able to meet this requirement.

If you would like tailored advice on how these changes might affect your care business or for guidance on your sponsorship duties during the transition period, please email our Business Immigration team online.enquiries@la-law.com or contact us on 01202 786148.

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