

A blurred background image showing two people working at desks. On the left, a woman is looking at a laptop screen. On the right, a man is looking at a laptop screen. There are coffee cups on the desks. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

Immigration Specialists for Every Journey

Guidance Document: SPONSOR COMPLIANCE

Sponsor Compliance

"I have to be very honest I have been travelling all around the world and working with many different departments. I haven't seen this precise services!!! They care about every detail, they reply really fast, they're up to date with you about all the steps. They're fast in the process in general, we are very happy to have chooses to work with them."

SA, Skilled Worker visa applicant

Sponsor Compliance

All entities with a sponsor licence in the UK are required to remain compliant with sponsor duties and responsibilities. These duties cover how businesses recruit, manage, monitor, and report on sponsored employees to ensure full compliance with immigration law.

What Is Sponsor Compliance?

Anyone who holds a UK sponsor licence is required to adhere to compliance rules; these rules are an ongoing set of legal and operational obligations which sponsors are required to abide by. Once a licence is granted, employers must continue to meet strict requirements under the Points-Based Immigration System to retain their ability to sponsor overseas workers. Compliance extends beyond assigning a Certificate of Sponsorship. It includes maintaining accurate records and effectively using HR systems to assist with accurate recording keeping, reporting key changes to the Home Office, and ensuring sponsored workers only carry out permitted roles. These duties apply throughout the duration of sponsorship, not just at the application stage.

Who Must Meet Sponsor Compliance Rules?

All organisations that hold a sponsor licence must comply with sponsor compliance rules. This includes UK businesses, charities, public sector bodies, and educational organisations.

Compliance obligations apply to every sponsored worker, regardless of seniority, nationality, visa length or type.

Employee's also have an obligation to ensure they are compliant with the conditions of their visa, and they may also have a requirement to report changes to their circumstances to the Home Office.

Documents You'll Need to Maintain

Licensed sponsors must keep detailed and up-to-date records for each sponsored worker. These documents must be readily available in case of a Home Office compliance visit. Key records include:

- Evidence of right-to-work checks
- Copies of passports and biometric residence permits
- Copies of Certificates of Sponsorship
- Employment contracts and job descriptions
- Absence and attendance records
- Up-to-date contact details
- Record-keeping duties apply across sponsored routes, such as the [Skilled Worker Visa](#), and form a central part of sponsor compliance assessments.
- Different visa categories will carry different record keeping requirements, so it's always good practice to check which documents you must keep on file for each sponsored worker.

Sponsor Compliance

"Have had a wonderful experience dealing with Migrate UK twice over. I got prompt and clear answers to all my queries and constant support from all levels in the organisation"

SB, UK Ancestry Visa Applicant

How Ensure You Meet the Sponsor Compliance Requirements

Step 1: Implement a Reliable HR System

Sponsors must have a system in place which can monitor sponsored workers effectively. This includes tracking start dates, job changes, absences, and salary adjustments. Robust systems are especially important for employers sponsoring workers under the [Skilled Worker](#) or [Global Business Mobility](#) routes, where role and salary thresholds must be maintained and reported.

Step 2: Understand Reporting Duties

Sponsors must report changes via the Sponsor Management System within strict deadlines.

Reportable events include changes to a worker's role, salary, work location, or employment status. These must be reported to the Home Office within 10 working days of the event occurring.

Changes to an organisation's circumstances, such as a change in premises or company size, must also be reported to the Home Office.

Step 3: Maintain Proper Up-to Date Records

All mandatory documents must be accurate, complete, and accessible. Missing or outdated records are one of the most common reasons for enforcement action.

Step 4: Prepare for Home Office Audits

The Home Office can conduct announced or unannounced compliance visits. Audits may review HR systems, interview key staff, and assess whether sponsored workers are carrying out permitted activities only.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Common sponsor compliance failures include:

Late or missed reporting on the SMS

Inadequate HR and monitoring systems

Missing or incomplete records

Assigning a CoS incorrectly under the [Skilled Worker Visa](#)

Misusing [Global Business Mobility](#) routes for roles that do not qualify

Allowing visitors to carry out work beyond what is permitted under [the Business Visit Visa](#)

These issues can often be avoided through regular internal audits, staff training, and professional compliance support.

Sponsor Compliance

“Amazing Team, seamless experience.”

SP, GBM Visa Applicant

How Long Must You Maintain Sponsor Compliance?

Sponsor compliance continues for as long as a licence is held. Ongoing responsibilities include:

Monitoring sponsored workers' immigration status

Keeping SMS information up to date

Reporting changes within required timeframes

Preparing for Home Office audits

Managing visa extensions and sponsor licence renewals

Record keeping requirements for each sponsored worker may even extend beyond the duration of their employment, so it's always important to check how long you must keep your records.

Why Choose Migrate UK

Migrate UK provides expert support across all aspects of sponsor compliance. Our services include compliance audits, HR system assessments, sponsor licence management, and direct engagement with the Home Office. We help employers reduce risk, maintain licence status, and sponsor overseas talent with confidence.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What duties apply to Skilled Worker sponsors?

Sponsors must meet reporting, record-keeping, and monitoring obligations throughout the sponsorship period under the [Skilled Worker Visa](#).

Do Global Business Mobility routes require sponsor compliance?

Yes. Employers sponsoring workers under [Global Business Mobility](#) routes are subject to the same compliance framework as other licensed sponsors.

How often can the Home Office carry out audits?

Audits can take place at any time, including before a licence is granted or during the life of a sponsor licence.

What happens if I fail to meet sponsor compliance rules?

Consequences may include licence suspension, downgrade, revocation, or civil penalties. In extreme cases criminal penalties can also apply.

Sponsor Compliance

"I highly recommend Migrate UK! From start to finish, the entire visa application process was incredibly smooth and stress-free, all thanks to their expert guidance. Dealing with visa applications can be confusing and overwhelming, but the team at Migrate UK made it feel completely manageable. They were thorough, professional, and exceptionally responsive to all my questions, often getting back to me within the hour. "

MK, Skilled Worker visa applicant

Can a business visitor undertake sponsored activities?

No. Visitors are limited to specific activities under the [Business Visit Visa](#). Substantive work generally requires sponsorship.

How long must records be kept?

Most sponsor records must be retained for the duration of sponsorship and for a period after it ends.

Do changes in job role always need reporting?

Yes, most role, salary, or location changes must be reported through the SMS. Some substantial changes may even trigger a requirement for a new visa so good practice is to always check and report.

Get Expert Help with Sponsor Compliance

Sponsor compliance can be complex, time-sensitive, and high-risk if handled incorrectly. Migrate UK offers tailored advice and ongoing support to help you meet your duties, prepare for audits, and protect your sponsor licence. Contact our team today to discuss your compliance needs.

About us

"We are a fast-growing SME in the utilities and property tech sector, and we've been delighted to work with Migrate UK to support members of our team transitioning from graduate visas into longer-term roles. From the very beginning, they have been professional, transparent, and an absolute pleasure to work with. Communication has been clear and supportive throughout, which made what could have been a complex process feel seamless."

Skilled Worker Sponsor

We are very proud of our heritage and our successes. Here are some of our headlines:

22

Years of providing immigration advice, making us one of the longest serving specialist immigration law firms in the UK

9000+

Applications processed

50+

Years of combined immigration experience in our team

5

Star rating on [Google](#) and [Trustist](#)

Read more about us online via our [website](#), [LinkedIn](#), and via [HR Ninjas](#)