

Common FAQs on the UK's New Immigration White Paper

What is the effective date of the new immigration reforms?

The first phase of the white paper's changes took effect on **22 July 2025**, including skill-level and salary threshold increases for the Skilled Worker route and the cap on post-study work stays for international graduates.

How has the Skilled Worker visa changed?

- **Skill threshold:** Raised from RQF Level 3 (A-Level) to RQF Level 6 (Bachelor's degree)
- **Salary threshold:** Increased to a minimum of £38,700 (or the going rate for the occupation, whichever is higher)
- **Outcome:** Only graduate-level roles now qualify, reducing entry for lower-skilled positions.

What happens to the post-study work visa?

The Graduate Route post-study work visa has been shortened from two years to **18 months** for bachelor's and master's graduates (doctoral holders retain a three-year stay). Graduates must secure sponsorship or switch into another eligible route before their visa expires.

Are any occupations still eligible for sponsorship?

Yes. Jobs listed on the **Shortage Occupation List** still qualify—often with discounted salary requirements. Medium-skill roles outside that list will remain time-limited pending the Migration Advisory Committee's 2026 review.

Will the Social Care Worker visa remain open?

No. The dedicated Social Care Worker route will **close to new applicants** from abroad. Existing visa holders have until 2028 to switch or extend in-country, but no fresh hires can join from overseas after the cutoff.

How have family and settlement rules changed?

- **Settlement (ILR):** Qualifying period extended from 5 to **10 years**
- **Family routes:** Simplified thresholds and an "earned settlement" model are under development, tying citizenship prospects to economic and community contributions.

What about language requirements?

English language standards across work, study, and family visas rise to **CEFR B2** (independent user), replacing the previous B1 requirement. Dependants must also meet higher language levels.

Are there new pathways for top talent?

Yes. The government plans to expand and streamline

- **Global Talent visa** for exceptional researchers and creatives
- **Innovator Founder** and **High Potential Individual** routes for entrepreneurs and graduates of top global universities
- **Fast-track** options for science, technology, and creative sector leaders.

How should employers and applicants prepare?

- **Employers** should audit skills gaps, invest in domestic training/apprenticeships, and bolster sponsor-compliance teams.
- **Applicants** must target graduate-level roles, strengthen qualifications to meet RQF 6, engage sponsors early, or explore specialised routes (Global Talent, Innovator).