

# FACTSHEET: SENIOR OR SPECIALIST WORKER

**SMITH  
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Immigration Practice

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Senior or Specialist Worker visa forms part of the UK's Global Business Mobility (GBM) immigration route for overseas businesses who need to temporarily send workers to the UK for a specific purpose that cannot be done by a settled worker.

A Senior or Specialist Worker visa allows you to come to or stay in the UK to do an eligible job at your employer's UK branch. From 11 April 2022, this visa has replaced the Intra-Company Transfer (ICT) visa.

**This guide outlines who is eligible for a Senior or Specialist Worker visa and how to apply.**

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for a Senior or Specialist Worker visa, you must:

- Be an existing employee of an organisation that's been approved by the Home Office as a sponsor.
- Have a 'Certificate of Sponsorship' (CoS) from your employer with information about the work you will do in the UK.
- Do a job that's on the list of [eligible occupations](#).
- Be paid at least £42,400 or the 'going rate' for your job - whichever is higher.

**Note:** If your salary in the UK will be less than £73,900 a year you must have worked for your employer outside the UK for at least 12 months. If you're earning £73,900 a year or more, there is no minimum time requirement.

## HOW LONG YOU CAN STAY

You can stay in the UK with a Senior or Specialist Worker visa for whichever is shorter of:

- The time given on your certificate of sponsorship plus 14 days
- 5 years

You can apply to extend your visa or apply for another one as many times as you like up to the maximum total stay. The maximum total stay allowed for a Senior or Specialist Worker visa is:

- 5 years in any 6 year period if you're paid less than £73,900 a year.
- 9 years in any 10 year period if you're paid £73,900 a year or more.

The maximum total stay includes all time spent in the UK on any of the GBM routes, including the predecessor ICT routes.

## PERMITTED ACTIVITIES

With a Senior or Specialist Worker visa, you can:

- Work for your sponsor in the job described in your CoS
- Study
- Bring dependant family members with you, if they are eligible
- Do voluntary work
- Travel abroad and return to the UK.

You cannot:

- Access public funds
- Change jobs, unless you update your visa
- Have a second job
- Apply to settle permanently in the UK.



## HOW TO APPLY

You must apply online for a Senior or Specialist Worker visa. How you apply depends on whether you are:

- [Outside the UK](#) and are coming to the UK
- Inside the UK and you want to [extend your stay as a Senior or Specialist Worker](#)
- Inside the UK and you want to [switch to this visa from another visa type](#).

As part of your application, you will need to prove your identity and provide your supporting documents. To do this, you will need to do one of the following:

- Attend an appointment at a Visa Application Centre (VAC) if you're outside the UK
- Attend an appointment at a UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services (UKVCAS) service point if you're inside the UK
- Use the 'UK Immigration: ID Check' app to scan your identity document, if you are eligible.

## HOW MUCH IT COSTS

When you apply for a Senior or Specialist Worker visa, you will need to have enough money to:

- Pay the visa application fee – The standard fee ranges from £625 to £1,423 depending on whether you are applying from inside or outside the UK, and how long you will be sponsored for.
- Pay the Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS) – The IHS is currently £624 per year, or £470 per year for under 18s.
- Support yourself in the UK – You will usually need to show that you have at least £1,270 in your bank account (unless you're exempt).

**Note:** The visa application fee and the IHS must also be paid for any accompanying dependants.

## PROCESSING TIMES

You can apply for a Senior or Specialist Worker visa up to 3 months before the day you are due to start work in the UK (this date is listed on your CoS). Once you've applied online, proved your identity and provided your documents, you'll usually get a decision on your visa within 3 weeks if you're outside the UK, or 8 weeks if you're inside the UK.

### SPONSORSHIP FEES

Employers transferring staff to the UK on a Senior or Specialist Worker visa should be aware of the various sponsorship fees that apply. Sponsors must pay the Immigration Skills Charge (ISC) for each Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS) issued to a Senior or Specialist Worker visa, unless an exemption applies. The current ISC fees are:

- Small or charitable sponsors: £364 for the first year of employment, plus £182 for each subsequent six month period.
- Medium or large sponsors: £1,000 for the first year of employment, plus £500 for each additional six month period.

The fee to assign a CoS to a Senior or Specialist Worker is £199.

**Please contact Smith Stone Walters for more information on this route.**

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