

To: • NHS provider organisations:  
Directors of nursing  
• NHS England and NHS  
Improvement: regional chief nurses

NHS England and NHS Improvement  
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cc. • NHS England and NHS  
Improvement: regional workforce  
directors  
• NHS provider organisations: HR  
directors

**25 October 2021**

Dear Colleagues,

## **International Nurse Recruitment funding offer - 2021/22**

Over the last 12 months, NHS trusts have significantly expanded international nurse recruitment (IR). This means the NHS is benefitting from thousands of additional dedicated and experienced international nurses, leading to reduced nursing vacancies across trusts.

This letter summarises new funding available to support you with your nursing IR, alongside details on how you can apply for funding.

### **Financial support offer**

This funding aims to enable expansion of future nursing international recruitment:

- Based on the level of expected demand from NHS trusts, we will aim to provide circa £3,000 per overseas nurse. For specific, harder-to-recruit roles where we know there are overseas additional requirements to support recruitment (mental health and learning disability nursing), we will aim to provide a £1,000 supplement, subject to available funding.
- This funding is to support appointments from 1 December 2021 onwards and arrivals from 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022.

The bids will be assessed based on quality, trust workforce and IR performance metrics, as well as available funds.

## Wider Support

This offer of financial support reflects our ongoing commitment to our international nurses and sits alongside our wider offer on nursing IR (see [here](#)). This offer includes:

- a) Nuffield Trust research on the return on investment of overseas nurse recruitment. The research is available [here](#) and we hope will be helpful in writing business cases relating to nursing IR.
- b) A core set of IR marketing materials for trusts to use in their local recruitment activity will soon be available. This will include information on application processes and benefits to working in the NHS for international nurses.

We will also explore ways of providing further support to overseas trained nurses already working in the NHS in non-registered nursing roles to join the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) register. We will use the information you provide to scope what further support might look like.

## Next steps

- Please provide a detailed plan in the supporting template on how you will increase capacity to expedite and increase your intake of internationally recruited nurses, including providing high quality pastoral care and OSCE training.
  - the annex sets out further information on the process for applying for financial support on IR.
  - Please provide your completed template by 5pm 15 November 2021. Please send to [NHSI.Workforce@nhs.net](mailto:NHSI.Workforce@nhs.net).
  - We will aim to provide the outcome of your expression of interest within 4 weeks of the submission date.
  - Executive approval of submissions is required.
- With consideration of elective recovery and Winter pressures, we ask you to review and expand where possible your IR recruitment activity, and ensure you have an effective plan to safely support the arrival, induction and training of the international nurses you have already appointed in the coming weeks and months.
- Please continue to report to ensure your trust submits data on this each month so we can monitor international recruitment information to support our ongoing work with the NMC and UK Visa and Immigration service. For more information contact [NHSI.workforce@nhs.net](mailto:NHSI.workforce@nhs.net).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact: [NHSI.workforce@nhs.net](mailto:NHSI.workforce@nhs.net).

Finally, we would like to thank you and your teams for all your incredible work to date in recruiting and supporting thousands of new international nurses.

Yours sincerely



**Duncan Burton**

Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for Workforce  
and Maternity Operations  
NHS England and NHS Improvement



**Ruth May**

Chief Nursing Officer for England  
NHS England and NHS Improvement

# ANNEX 1: Financial support offer to trusts

## Bidding for funding

### Expanding future international nursing supply

- This funding is intended to expand future international nursing recruitment and to provide high quality pastoral care and support in order to support staff retention. **Funding to support midwifery IR is being allocated via a separate funding process.**
- You will be required in the template to provide the key actions you will take and the associated breakdown in expenditure to achieve this.
- We aim to provide £3,000 per overseas nurse.
- The following areas will be considered for a £1,000 supplement:
  - Mental Health
  - Learning Disability
- Bids can cover a range of activities designed to expand your international nursing recruitment and enhance your pastoral offer, including for example resourcing costs to increase your IR capacity or recruiting new nurses from overseas and supporting them into shortage specialties.
- We strongly welcome and encourage collaborative bids across NHS organisations and for trusts to pool resources via regional hubs/ integrated care systems (ICs) /specialties/sector where possible. It might be to expand or join existing lead recruiter models or to establish, for example, new regional, mental health or children's nursing collaborative recruiter models.
- If you choose to do a collaborative bid, please just submit one expression of interest across your collaboration and the lead organisation would receive the combined funding for all organisations in the bid.
- **Please ensure all your IR activity adheres to the [Code of Practice for International Recruitment](#). In particular, ensure you do not recruit from developing countries unless there is a government-to-government agreement in place (see [here](#) for the current list of relevant developing countries). This will be a condition in the Memorandum of Understanding between us and trusts on any IR funding support provided.**
- Please ensure that your bids are realistic and reflect a sustainable, financially sound approach to IR as **funding available in future years is not guaranteed.**

### Supporting overseas trained nurses working in the NHS in non-registered nursing roles

- We know from trust data collections there are a significant number of overseas trained nurses currently working in the NHS as healthcare support workers/healthcare assistants, who have been unable to pass the required Test of Competence (CBT and/or OSCE) or English Language (EL) requirements to join the NMC register.
- We recognise the important contribution these individuals make to the NHS. We are therefore exploring how we can best support these individuals
- To help us determine the best way to determine the support required, we ask that you identify the number of individuals that may be eligible for support in the accompanying template attached.

## **Bid assessment**

- We will require executive support within your organisation.
- The funding will be awarded to directors of nursing so that there is direct oversight of the use of the funds to focus on effective management and a positive experience for the new international nurses.
- When assessing bids, we will consider progress to date of 2020/21 funding commitments.
- Each trust will be expected to report on their progress on nursing IR committed to in this funding application process as an item at the organisation's public board.
- The funding for this year will be an upfront payment to ensure we can quickly accelerate IR plans. The funding is intended to support the activity and associated costs of increasing international recruitment in the 2022 calendar year. Where costs are incurred in January to March 2022 which facilitates arrivals for the rest of the calendar year, the income can be recognised in 2021/22. There is no requirement to specifically defer the income until the additional recruits arrive as the performance obligation for the trust is the broader activity to support increased international recruitment. However, please be aware we will have the opportunity to claw back this funding if we identify the trust is not using this funding appropriately.