



**SONIC HEALTHCARE
UK**

Staff Policy

Sonic Healthcare UK - Sponsorship Policy and Procedure

Version 3



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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 At Sonic Healthcare UK we believe that a fair and transparent recruitment process should be followed for all vacancies within the business. This is to ensure the right candidate is placed in the right role, without discrimination. For roles where an appropriate candidate with current right to work in the UK cannot be sought, recruiting managers may explore the option of sponsoring the right to work of a suitable applicant.
- 1.1.2 By offering sponsorship, Sonic Healthcare UK is able to ensure vacancies are filled by candidates with the required skillset and experience, where there is a shortage in the UK.

2 Purpose

- 2.1.1 This policy aims to set clear guidance for managers to ensure they are offering sponsorship opportunities in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Home Office.
- 2.1.2 The policy aims to outline the steps required when applying for visa sponsorship.

3 Duties

3.1 Employee's Responsibilities

- Both new applicants and current colleagues are responsible for ensuring their right to work is valid prior to starting employment and during their employment.
- When seeking sponsorship employees must ensure they supply any documents required by the HR department in a timely manner.

3.2 Line Manager's Responsibilities

- Line Managers are responsible for ensuring sponsorship is issued in accordance with Home Office guidelines by following the below process and guidance from the HR department.

3.3 Human Resources Department Responsibilities

- Human Resources will liaise with immigration lawyers in order to provide accurate guidance to managers.
- Human Resources will apply for the Certificate of Sponsorship.

- Human Resources will provide the employee with any proof of employment required to support in visa applications when requested.

4 Definitions

Sponsorship: In roles where the Home Office have deemed there to be a shortage of qualified professionals within the UK, Sonic Healthcare UK can sponsor the process of gaining right to work for overseas applicants.

Right to Work: An official document proving the person listed on the document has the right to work within the UK. The list of accepted documents is published by the Home Office.

Certified copy: This is a scanned copy of a document which is signed by the Line Manager to confirm that they have seen the original document, that they believe the document to be genuine and that they believe the person named on the document is the one presenting it.

Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS): This certificate is gained by Sonic Healthcare UK from The Home Office and is required to provide sponsorship for an individual.

Tier 2 Visa: This is a high skilled worker visa and is supplied when someone is sponsored by a company. This visa restricts the holder to the role and company specified.

Inter-Company Transfer: for multinational companies which need to transfer employees to the UK.

5 Policy Development

Every 2 years or in light of legislative changes or further guidance being issued and at Management request.

6 Policy Principles

- 6.1.1 All offers of sponsorship can only be provided in line with Home Office regulation.
- 6.1.2 As per Home Office regulation, priority must be given to anybody with current right to work in the UK. Only when a suitable candidate with current right to work cannot be found will sponsorship be considered.
- 6.1.3 As per Home Office regulation, only specific roles can be offered sponsorship. This is subject to Home Office review.
- 6.1.4 As this process is dependent upon Home Office regulation, any sponsorship decisions or requirements will ultimately be determined by the Home Office and not Sonic Healthcare UK.
- 6.1.5 Anybody found to be manipulating or falsifying documents within the sponsorship process will be subject to Sonic Healthcare UK disciplinary action and reported to the Home Office where appropriate.

7 Policy Procedure

7.1 Sponsoring a New Starter

- 7.1.1 When recruiting into a vacancy, a manager may explore the possibility of offering an applicant sponsorship, but only if they are the only suitable candidate and the role is accepted by the Home Office as a role eligible for sponsorship.
- 7.1.2 Once a suitable candidate has been identified the recruiting manager must send a copy of the current passport to HR along with details of the role being offered, the relevant job description and the agreed salary.
- 7.1.3 HR will then apply to the Home Office for a Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS).
- 7.1.4 CoS applications are considered by the Home Office and time frames for this approval will depend upon the Home Office workload.
- 7.1.5 Once the CoS has been received this will be issued to the applicant who will have to then apply for their visa.
- 7.1.6 The applicant is welcome to use Sonic Healthcare UK's preferred immigration lawyers however this will be at their expense. Any costs will be added to the final bill which will be deducted via wages in instalments if required (see section 7.6).

7.1.7 Once the applicant has successfully gained the visa their manager must supply HR with a certified copy of the document, along with an online pdf check completed on the Gov.uk website, prior to commencing work.

7.2 Sponsoring a Current Colleague

7.2.1 If an individual's current visa is expiring and would like to explore the possibility of sponsorship, they must first notify their line manager. They will need to provide all of the circumstances in relation to their current eligibility to work and the reason for requesting sponsorship.

7.2.2 No sponsorship will be considered for employees with more than 3 months remaining on their current work permit.

7.2.3 Authorisation to sponsor sits with the relevant Director. All approvals for sponsorship must meet Home Office criteria, and be approved by a Director based on service requirements.

7.2.4 Eligibility for sponsorship will depend on the job role, responsibilities and salary. This is determined by the Home Office.

7.2.5 Sponsorship is not an employment right, and so if it is not appropriate for the role, based on the costs to the organization, the relevant Director has the authority to refuse sponsorship.

7.2.6 Details of how to proceed if sponsorship is possible will be issued to the line manager from HR, dependent on Home Office criteria.

7.3 Extending Sponsorship

7.3.1 Tier 2 visas can be issued for a maximum of 5 years and 14 days, or the time given on the CoS plus 1 month, whichever is shorter.

7.3.2 Any employee whose Tier 2 sponsorship visa has been issued for under the 5 year maximum may explore the possibility of extending their visa. The employee is responsible for requesting a visa extension where applicable.

7.3.3 In order to extend a Tier 2 sponsorship visa the employee must request this via their Line Manager who must again seek Director authorisation. Failure to request an extension, or sought an alternative right to work prior to visa expiry may result in the employee having no valid right to work and facing disciplinary action.

- 7.3.4 The HR department will then seek approval from the Home Office to extend the Tier 2 sponsorship visa where possible.
- 7.3.5 Approval to extend sponsorship is made by the Home Office and Tier 2 visas may not exceed 5 years.
- 7.3.6 If an employee is unable to extend their Tier 2 visa it is their responsibility to gain an alternative right to work.
- 7.3.7 The HR department will support individuals making visa applications directly to the Home Office by supplying proof of employment where requested. Details of the information required must be sent to HR@tdlpathology.com.
- 7.3.8 Visa renewal is the responsibility of the employee and failure to renew proof of right to work prior to the old document expiring may result in disciplinary action and notification to the Home Office where appropriate.

7.4 Inter-company Transfers

- 7.4.1 Sonic Healthcare UK may consider applications for inter-company transfers where appropriate. This will be determined by company demands.
- 7.4.2 Inter-company transfers can only be utilised for roles that meet Home Office requirements.

7.5 Immigration Lawyers

- 7.5.1 Sonic Healthcare UK will seek immigration advice from the company's preferred immigration lawyers.
- 7.5.2 Any employees wishing to use the service to support with sponsorship visas only may do this; however this will be at their own expense.
- 7.5.3 Sonic Healthcare UK do not have in-house immigration solicitors and so any advice or guidance regarding immigration status and right to work permits should be sought from independent immigration experts.

7.6 Sponsorship Costs

- 7.6.1 Sonic Healthcare UK will cover the cost of the Certificate of Sponsorship (CoS)
- 7.6.2 The employee is responsible for all other sponsorship costs and any immigration lawyer services they access.

7.6.3 Employees should be mindful that sponsorship costs can exceed £5,000 depending on circumstances, and so must ensure they have the capacity to cover costs associated with their sponsorship.

7.6.4 Where an employee opts to seek guidance from Sonic Healthcare UK's recommended immigration solicitors, an invoice will be sent to the employee upon completion of their sponsorship and is repaid via a wage deduction. This can be split over 12 or 24 months. If an employee leaves prior to the full balance being repaid, any monies outstanding will be deducted from the final wage.

7.7 Changes to a Sponsored Employees Circumstances

7.7.1 Any changes in circumstance to a sponsored employee's job role, location or salary must be communicated by the line manager to the HR department so that they can update the Home Office.

8 Document Approval

Document Approvals are recorded within the document record card within Sonic Healthcare UKs electronic quality management system (e-QMS).

Approved documents will be marked as active in the footer of the document. Documents that are not marked approved are not considered controlled. Printed copies are not permitted.

Records of approval and reference copies of procedures are available from HR@tdlpathology.com.

9 Change Details

Change Request number	Change Detail	Implemented in Version Number
N/A	N/A	N/A