

'Embarrassing' new immigration rules exclude care workers and NHS staff



Who will keep our hospitals running and our care homes going when ministers pull up the drawbridge, asks GMB Union?

GMB, the union for NHS staff and care workers, has described the Government's new immigration rules as an 'embarrassing shambles'.



Ministers appear to have excluded care workers and NHS contractors from their 'health and care visa' while draconian salary thresholds mean many NHS cleaners, porters and support staff won't qualify.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) analysis published in March, requested by GMB, revealed more than 350,000 adult care workers, who were born in EU and non-EU countries, in the year to September 2019 – a figure that has increased by 43 per cent since 2009/10.

Approximately 237,000 workers were **born outside the EU**.

In addition, according to the most recent ONS figures, there are an estimated 110,000 vacancies in adult social care.

The sector has an exceptionally high rate of 8 per cent, compared to a vacancy rate of 2.8 per cent across all sectors.

Rehana Azam, GMB National Secretary, said:

"The Government's new immigration rules are descending into an embarrassing shambles and makes no consideration or acknowledgement of the vital job care workers have been doing these past few months.

"The proposed 'Health and Care Visa' apparently fails to include care workers and NHS contractors within its scope – and imposes salary thresholds that would prevent most underpaid care workers and many NHS porters, cleaners, and other support staff from qualifying for in any event.

"Who will keep our hospitals running and our care home going when ministers pull up the drawbridge?

"At a time when care is facing its greatest ever crisis, and with care homes reliant on hundreds of thousands of workers from outside Europe and facing staffing shortfalls, ministers are cutting off their noses to spite their faces.

"It's those who rely on care and their families who now face being punished by this ministerial incompetence.

"Demand on health and social care is increasing every day and the pandemic has shown just how vital these workers are, yet the Government seems intent on keep branding them as low skilled and exacerbating the crisis by creating new barriers.

"The Government is piling on stress and anxiety to the high-skilled, underpaid workers who do an outstanding job keeping our country going and without whom we could not simply do without."



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