



NHS and care visa extension vital to avoid catastrophic winter crisis

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GMB, the union for health and social care staff, have called on the UK Government to extend working visa's for our key workers due to expire in the coming months, to help fight the second wave of the deadly Covid19 virus

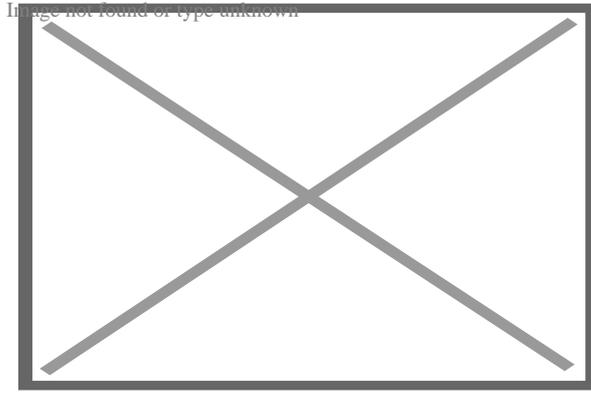
GMB union is calling for the UK Government to extend working visas for NHS staff and care workers to avoid a 'catastrophic winter crisis'.

From October 1, all health and social care workers who require a working visa will have to reapply when their current visa expires - despite fighting on the frontline against the coronavirus pandemic for months – potentially leading to thousands leaving the sector as winter and a second wave approaches.

Back in March the Government automatically extended visa's for NHS staff due to expire before 1st October by 12 months - to make sure the NHS had the staff to fight the covid crisis.

That automatic extension ends on Thursday [October 1].

Initially the Government excluded social care staff, but after intense campaigning from GMB, Ministers extended the extension to social care staff.



Rachel Harrison, GMB national officer said:

“The storm clouds are gathering; as we prepare for a second spike of coronavirus, twinned with the likely recurrence of the winter crises that have engulfed the NHS over the last decade – we could be heading towards a catastrophic winter.

“We can’t have a situation where there are gaps in frontline services during the dark, cold months.

“Ministers need to act now to ensure the NHS can concentrate on stopping this pandemic, rather than wasting precious resources backfilling roles.

“This extension should include all health and social care workers, regardless of job role or income.

“This looming crisis is imminently avoidable. The Government needs to act now.”