Rogue Care Firms: 100k Migrant Sponsorships

New research by the Centre for Migration Control (CMC) reveals that care firms suspended or struck-off the register of sponsors awarded at least 99,686 certificates of sponsorship (CoS) to care workers and senior care workers between 2022 and 2025.

The data shows for the first time how widely the care visa, introduced by the last Conservative government, was abused and highlights the impending disaster which may arise if the so-called 'BorisWave' is given Indefinite Leave to Remain in the coming years.

Centre
For
Migration
Control

Headline Findings

Between the start of 2022 and the end of 2025, there were 1,443 suspension notices issued to businesses on the register of sponsors, and who had awarded at least one CoS to a care worker or senior care worker.

1,049 businesses had their licence revoked in the same period, with a total of 1,297 businesses receiving at least one sanction, and many receiving several.

To put this number in context, the Migration Observatory found that in December 2023 that there were around 3,000 registered care homes on the sponsorship register, and a further 2,500 firms involved in the wider care sector (including domiciliary care).

Between them, these sanctioned businesses awarded at least 99,686 certificates of sponsorship for roles with the SOC codes 6145 (care workers) and 6146 (senior care workers).

The true figure is likely higher as the data for businesses which awarded five or fewer COS are redacted in the information provided to the CMC.

There were 345 businesses sanctioned during this time period that had awarded 100 or more certificates of sponsorship.

These figures do not include the dependants and family members who would also have arrived with migrant workers awarded a COS.

The awarding of a COS does not mean for certain that the individual came to Britain. However, as of 2nd September 2026, the Home Office is refusing to produce data on the number of certificates of sponsorship that were subsequently used as part of a successful visa application. Currently, data on COS are the most useful proxy that we have.

Furthermore, these figures pertain to both defined and undefined certificates of sponsorship and could thus have been used as either part of entry or extension visa applications.

About the Register of Sponsors

The Register of Licensed Sponsors took its current form in 2008, as part of New Labour's 'points-based immigration system'.

Before being added to the register an organisation must justify its need for a licence, demonstrate that it is legally operating in the United Kingdom, and nominate an authorising officer to ensure the organisation remains compliant with its obligations.

Holding a licence gives access to the sponsorship management system (SMS), through which organisations can apply for certificates from UKVI before assigning them to workers to be used as part of a visa application.

Sponsorship is an incredibly devolved process, and is almost entirely reliant on the propriety of those businesses that hold a licence. As the Home Office admits, "sponsorship transfers a significant amount of responsibility and trust to sponsors". Sponsors seek membership of the regime "for their own benefit" and that they thus must play their part in ensuring the immigration system is not abused.

Duties expected of a sponsor include:

- reporting – sponsors must report certain information or events to the Home Office using the online sponsorship management system (SMS), within the time limit set (for example, if a migrant worker has left the sponsor's employment)
- record keeping – sponsors are required to keep certain records and documents and make them available to Home Office staff on request; examples include evidence that the sponsor has checked each of the sponsored workers has the legal right to work in the UK and that they hold full up-to-date contact details for all sponsored workers
- complying with immigration laws – sponsors must ensure that they comply with the immigration laws, including assigning a certificate of sponsorship (CoS) where there is a genuine vacancy, disclosure of CoS assigned to any family members, and only allowing workers to undertake the roles permitted by the conditions of their stay
- complying with UK law – sponsors must comply with UK law, including payment of the National Minimum Wage, adherence to the Working Time Regulations, and registration with a statutory body where appropriate
- not engaging in certain behaviours or actions that are not conducive to the public good – these behaviours and actions include fostering hatred, glorifying terrorism, and discrimination

Once awarded, a licence lasts indefinitely. Whilst compliance inspections can be conducted in-person to ensure the rules are still being followed, this process has increasingly moved to online and desktop based work, thus reducing the efficacy of the process and diminishing the scrutiny applied to organisations.

As summarised by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration: "Despite the significant responsibility attached to a sponsor licence, a relatively light touch approach is, by the Home Office's admission, applied to applications for these licences".

Between Q1 2019 and Q2 2026, the number of organisations registered to sponsor skilled workers grew from 28,734 to 126,104 – a 338% increase.



In early 2025, the Centre for Migration Control first highlighted that the system was allowing low-value businesses, such as kebab and vape shops, to bring migrants to Britain.

Since then there has been widespread scrutiny of the register. As it was discovered that organisations linked to the Iranian regime were on the register of sponsors, along with businesses that had previously been fined for hiring illegal workers, and a host of other low-grade businesses.

Problems with the Care Visa

Lowered entry requirements

The health visa was expanded in 2022 to include care workers following the profession being added to the shortage occupation list. The skills threshold was set at RQF Level 3 the minimum salary threshold was initially set at £20,480 before increasing to £20,960 in April 2023.

Those applying on this route, along with their dependants, were exempt from the Immigration Health Surcharge, which usually costs £1,035 per person per year. Care workers also enjoyed reduced visa fees and a streamlined visa application process with support provided by UKVI.

Rate of dependants

Between 2022 and 2025, there were 664,798 health and care entry visas awarded. Just 262,787 were to main applicants, whilst 402,011 were to dependants, a ratio of 1: 1.5.

Certain nationalities saw even more outrageous ratios. For example, there were a total of 131,918 health and care entry visas awarded to Nigerians, with 42,342 going to main applicants and 89,576 going to dependants.

Abuse of register of sponsors

The introduction of a visa route with such dramatically reduced salary and skills requirements placed a huge burden on existing processes. Such was the surge in businesses applying to make use of this route, 11,614 human health and social work organisations applied between February 2022 and October 2023, that the Home Office's Work Sponsorship team were required to dramatically expand.

This uptick in applications from businesses which had previously been unable to sponsor migrants caused significant problems in the Home Office, as reported in a March 2024 report by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. The system was found to be "not sufficiently stringent to enable refusal of licence applications, even where significant concerns about an organisation existed". This was compounded by a pivot towards a greater use of digital pre-licence checks, rather than the more effective physical inspections.

The conclusion made by inspectors was that "The sponsor licence application process was not sufficiently robust to identify individuals who intended to abuse the system". Many Home Office officials indicated to the inspector that their role was basically to wave organisations onto the register.

Despite the Home Office being aware of widespread abuse of the route, only 1.5% of applications made by organisations from the 'Human Health and Social Work Activities' sector were rejected between February 2022 and October 2023.

Estimated application volumes

The Home Office and Department for Health and Social Care both forecast that the number of applications for care workers would be between 6,000 and 40,000 per annum.

In reality, between February 2022 and October 2023, there had been decisions made on 160,991 applications for care workers (SOC 6145) - with 91% being granted. A further 42,827 applications for senior care workers (SOC 6146) had been decided - of which 92% were granted.

Asylum claims

In January 2026, it was reported that since the launch of the visa, more than 10,000 migrants who arrived via the route have claimed asylum:

Revoked sponsorships

Migrants who are sponsored by an organisation that has had its licence revoked have a 60-day window within which to find a new sponsor, or they will be classified as an overstayer. There is currently little way to tell whether a migrant has actually left after their visa has expired, and thus many may have continued working in Britain without permission.

The last government created the international recruitment fund, making available £15m to - amongst other things - help care workers whose sponsor has lost

its licence to find a new employer. The government provides support for care firms who are "looking to hire displaced international workers". A one-stop-shop for unscrupulous businesses to access foreign labour and avoid their societal obligations to invest in the British workforce.

Ongoing problems

This rampant abuse of the care visa is revealed at a time when the Labour government is still undecided as to whether care workers should be able to obtain Indefinite Leave to Remain within five years, or be required to face the time extension set out by Shabana Mahmood's settlement proposals of November 2025.

The Home Office has produced its own forecasts which suggests more than 450,000 care workers will obtain settlement between 2026 and 2030, with a net lifetime cost to the taxpayer of £9.5bn. Of course, the further problem with awarding settlement to care workers is it gives them the right to work without requiring a sponsor, and could thus beget an exodus from the sector.

The Labour government suspended the care visa route for entry visas in July 2025, but kept it open for extension visas until 2028. Yet the Home Office still awarded 336,215 extension visas between Q3 2025 and Q2 2026, with just 140,136 of these being to main applicants. The remaining 196,079 extension visas were awarded to dependants.

Case Studies

Prestine Healthcare Group

Incorporated in August 2021, Prestine Healthcare Group Ltd was added to the register of sponsors in August 2022 with just 1 employee at this time.

It was suspended from the register in February 2025, and had its licence revoked in April 2025.
In less than three years, the organisation had awarded 163 Certificates of Sponsorship.

The reasons for the revocation of Prestine's licence is a case study in the abuse seen across the care visa.

- The firm was found to be operating, not as the nurse agency it was registered as, but as an employment agency, supplying care workers it sponsored to care homes provided by third parties.
- The vacancies for which migrants had been sponsored were not genuine, and staff were being paid less than the salary which had been declared to the Home Office,
- Migrants sponsored by the organisation were found to be working in a kitchen and office, not as care staff.

- The firm was not monitoring the attendance of staff, keeping their contact details up to date, and was not informing the Home Office when it was no longer sponsoring individuals.
- The firm was not properly conducting Right to Work checks, nor was it recording visa expiry dates.

GeoCare Services Ltd

In August 2026, GeoCare Services was put into special measures by the Care Quality Commission.

As of December 2025, the organisation had "81 staff, including 71 sponsored migrant workers under the skilled worker route". It has held a sponsor licence since 2021, and awarded 100 care worker certificates of sponsorship between 2022 and 2025.

The Home Office found that the company was paying staff members significantly less than the amount which was declared on their certificate of sponsorship. In defence, GeoCare Services claimed that this was because staff were not turning up to work, and thus this was resulting in lower wage being paid:

"We have been having a lot of dialogs with certain staff members due to their early disruption of shift, and this has been going on for a considerable number of times, these set of individuals will call the office line and send messages stating that they can only work Tuesdays and Thursday, as we can't force them to work

it is against their human right, when we say it is contractual agreement set. When they care called to work, they will refuse to pick up their phone or and accept the care calls on their Rota app."

This is very clear evidence that many migrants have simply used the care visa route as a means to enter the United Kingdom, with no intention of contributing to the care sector.

Efficiency-For Care Ltd

Efficiency-For Care Ltd (EFC) is the platonic example of the failures and chaos associated with the care visa. In 2022 EFC had just 16 employees. In 2023, this figure had increased to 152, predominantly individuals from Africa. EFC issued its first certificates of sponsorship in March 2022, and before being removed from the register in July 2023 it had issued a total of 1,240 certificates of sponsorship. In April 2026, the company was issued with a winding up order.

EFC appeared in a 2025 BBC report, which found that migrants were paying relocation agents thousands of pounds to obtain a certificate of sponsorship from licenced UK businesses. This report combined the two phenomena now known to have defined the care visa: migrants prepared to circumvent British immigration law, and companies selling visas to these individuals.

EFC challenged the Home Office's decision to revoke its licence on the basis that the company had failed to comply with Annex C1(x) of sponsor duties, and that it had acted as "an employment agency or employment business" and had "supplied a worker it was sponsoring to a third party as labour."

It is staggering that EFC was even eligible to issue certificates of sponsorship given that as far back as 2018 it had been found to have made "unlawful deductions" from a staff member's wages.

During this 2018 employment tribunal hearing, the managing director of EFC was named as "Ms Bello". It is assumed that this refers to "Miss Aisha Angela Bello" who was involved with the company since 2016, regularly being appointed, terminated, and re-appointed as a director of EFC. Indeed, Companies House shows that Bello holds more than 75% of shares in Efficiency Healthcare Services Ltd, the company listed as having significant control of EFC.

Bello's Linkedin confirms that she was indeed the Director of EFC between 2018 and 2024, before the company was transferred to Efficiency Healthcare Services Ltd. She is now a GP trainee with the East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust.

Prestwick Care Ltd

Prestwick Care joined the register of sponsors in 2008. In February 2023 the Home Office revoked the sponsor

licence of Prestwick Care, a group made up of three companies that operated 15 care homes. Across these sites, there were 857 staff, with 219 of them being employed under the visa sponsorship scheme.

There were several reasons for the revocation which, again, show the improper practices that were allowed to proliferate as the result of insufficient enforcement from the Home Office:

- Certificates of Sponsorship had been assigned to individuals to come and work as Senior Care Assistants, but there was no evidence that these roles actually existed.
- Staff were found to be receiving salaries that did not correspond with the amount declared to the Home Office.
- The firm was recouping the Immigration Skills Charge, which it is required to pay the Home Office, from employees' salaries.
- The firm was not monitoring whether individuals that it was sponsoring had a continued right to work in Britain.
- Prestwick Care was failing to keep accurate records of the addresses of those it was sponsoring.

Unbelievably, during its judicial review of the Home Office's decision, Prestwick Care claimed the reason why some individuals were not working in the roles defined on their CoS was because they were "found to

lhave difficulties with communication due to her English and for that reason had been taken off various of her duties temporarily". These duties included the distribution of medicine. This is a clear failure of the recruitment process that had proliferated as the result of a reduced skills threshold, as well as improper checks conducted by the Home Office.