

# International Paramedic Recruitment Programme – Pilot

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Health Education England (HEE) are committing monies from this year's Comprehensive Spending Review settlement to address identified workforce shortages in the Paramedic profession. HEE are looking to develop a robust offering of international recruitment of paramedics that is mutually beneficial to the NHS and 'host nations'. The Directorate of Global Health Partnerships (DGHP) have significant experience of health professional recruitment programmes, most notably developing a highly successful model for the international recruitment of Registered Nurses which saw over 2,000 nurses joining the English NHS. Working under the leadership of HEE's National Allied Health Professional Lead, DGHP are proposing to conduct a pilot programme of an International Recruitment for Newly Qualified Paramedics from Australia. This work will be the first of several work packages to address the Paramedic workforce shortage.

This paper outlines the proposed pilot, its rationale and the steps required by NHS Ambulance Trusts should they wish to partner with HEE for this work.

## Scope

The monies allocated from the Comprehensive Spending Review have to be utilised within the current financial year (2021/22). As such, the pilot we are proposing needs to be rapidly developed and implemented, with job offers being issued to successful candidates before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

Through the DGHP, HEE have run ethical, sustainable education based, international recruitment programmes for several years, including [Nurses](#), [Doctors](#) and [Radiographers](#) and are able to build on their knowledge and expertise to develop a paramedic pathway. In seeking a target market for the recruitment of NQPs from overseas we have sought to identify a country or region where:

- Paramedics are trained to a similar standard to UK-educated Paramedics and can meet HCPC registration requirements
- Paramedics from the country or region generally have the ability to meet the English Language requirements (IELTS or TOEFL) of the HCPC and UK Visa & Immigration Service
- There is an oversupply of Paramedics (that is, the country/region trains more Paramedics than their domestic services require)
- There is a history of migration from the identified country or region to the UK, preferably of Paramedics

Our analysis of potential countries resulted in **Australia** being identified as the country most closely aligned to the outlined criteria and as such we will focus the initial pilot phase of recruitment on NQP graduating from Australian Universities Furthermore, previous initiatives undertaken by London Ambulance Service strongly suggests we will optimise success by focusing on **Newly-Qualified Paramedics** (NQPs) graduating from the 15 Universities in Australia who offer a Paramedic Practice/Paramedic Science/Paramedicine Bachelors programme similar to those offered by UK Universities. The rationale for selecting this group as the focus for the pilot is:

- There is a track record of successful HCPC registration for NQPs from Australian Universities
- English is most commonly the first language and there is no requirement for recruits to pass an IELTS/TOEFL qualification. This can reduce the recruitment timeframe by approx. 3 to 6 months)

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- There is an oversupply of NQPs in Australia. Many fail to secure employment after graduating and are therefore lost to the profession
- There is a strong history of migration from Australia to the UK in many professions, including Paramedicine
- The timeline of Australian students receiving job offers and University results aligns well to the timeframe of this pilot and therefore job offers can be made before the end of the current financial year.

The pilot will be fully evaluated and – subject to future funding – potentially expanded beyond NQPs and Australia in future. The aim is to develop an overseas Paramedic recruitment pathway that can be managed by the Ambulance Services going forwards.

### Proposed Pilot

The pilot will recruit Newly Qualified Paramedics from Australia into pre-agreed NHS Ambulance Trusts. Recruits will be employed initially on a 3-year contract, with sponsorship for a 3-year Tier II UK Visa provided by the employing Ambulance Trust. At the end of the initial 3-year contract the Ambulance Service will be able to offer a contract extension and Visa sponsorship extension if desired by both the Trust and the Paramedic.

The pilot will run as a national programme, co-ordinated by Health Education England's DGHP with common processes and financial packages offered regardless of which Trust the candidates join.

The pilot will be marketed by HEE as a system offer as opposed to marketed separately by each Ambulance Trust. The marketing will include details of the Trusts engaged in the pilot and the broad geographic areas they are recruiting for. Applicants will apply to join either a named Trust, or to be put forward to interview at any of the Trusts on the pilot. They will also be able to state a preference for the type of area they will be based at e.g. rural, urban, coastal etc.

Candidates will be supported through the HCPC and UK Visa application processes and be offered a comprehensive relocation and settling in package.

The pilot will be fully evaluated, and a report shared with stakeholders on completion. The evaluation report will include recommendations made for future recruitment practice and potential rollout.

The HCPC, Home Office (Visa & Immigration) and DVLA (for driving licence issues) are key to pilot and IR success. HEE/DGHP have established relationships with key stakeholders and will ensure engagement is at the required level for programme success. The Australian Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA) are also engaged, and HEE are developing relationships with the 15 Universities in Australia offering Paramedic programmes.

Initial conversations have already taken place with DVLA and an agreed process for ensuring applicants can receive a full UK driving licence with Cat C1 provisional status within around 4-6 weeks of their arrival in the country is now in place.

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## Indicative Timescales

|   | 2021 |     |     |     | 2022 |     |     |     |     |     | Post Pilot |
|---|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|
|   | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan  | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun |            |
| Ambulance Services join Pilot programme   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Marketing of opportunity to final year Australian Paramedic students  |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Final year Australian Paramedic students apply for posts in domestic ambulance services   |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Applications accepted to join pilot accepted from final year Australian Paramedic students                                      |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Final year Australian Paramedic students receive University qualifications / job offers in domestic ambulance service confirmed |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Interviews undertaken for candidates to join pilot programme  |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Successful applicants issued with job offers  |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Applicants supported through HCPC and UKVI application processes  |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Candidates arrive at Ambulance Trust (usually 5-6 months after interview), settling in package/NQP Programme offered            |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |
| Evaluation of Pilot / future expansion  |      |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |     |            |

## HEE Input

Health Education England will:

- Act as national co-ordinator for the pilot Programme
- Provide a dedicated Project Manager (who is also a HCPC registered Paramedic) and Project Administrator to support the Pilot
- Manage the programme funding
- Ensure the Programme has a robust ethical, sustainable and evidence-based foundation
- Engage partners to the pilot, including NHS Ambulance Trusts, HCPC, UK Visa & Immigration Service, UK Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE), Australian Council of Ambulance Authorities (CAA), Australian Universities and DVLA.
- Market the programme and act as first point of contact
- Manage the applications process
- Provide support and guidance to partner Ambulance Trusts regarding international recruitment processes, pre-employment checks and pastoral support requirements
- Provide support and guidance to applicants regarding HCPC and UKVI applications
- Agree arrival dates between candidates and their Ambulance Trust and book flights
- Conduct an evaluation of the Programme and disseminate findings
- Ensure there is a clear reporting and Governance structure in place

## Ambulance Trusts Input

The partner Ambulance Trusts will be required to:

- Formally sign-up to the Pilot programme, including agreeing to the Financial Framework
- Provide staff resource to conduct interviews, undertake pre-employment checks and HR processing
- Source and pay for accommodation for the Paramedics for 3 months upon arrival

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- Provide an appropriate induction and Newly Qualified Paramedic Programme
- Provide ongoing pastoral and professional support

### Financial Framework

In line with other HEE-led recruitment Programmes, a defined Financial Framework has been established which sets out what costs each party are likely to face and what 'package' they are required to provide. Some of the costs below are variable (e.g. flights/accommodation costs) so an average cost is shown for budgeting purposes.

| EXPECTED COSTS                           | Service        | Paramedic    | Notes  |
|--|----------------|--------------|--|
| English Language Training                | £ -            | £ -          | Assumes candidate already from majority English speaking country e.g. Australia  |
| HCPC Application Fee                     | £ 540          | £ -          | Initially paid by Paramedic. Refunded by employer upon arrival in UK   |
| Certificate of Sponsorship               | £ 199          | £ -          | Home Office document required to apply for Visa  |
| Immigration Skills Charge payable to UK  | £ 3,000        | £ -          | Home Office fee of £1,000 per year - assumes post for initial 3 years  |
| Visa (3 year Visa, costs paid in year 1) | £ 232          | £ -          | Cost varies slightly due to fluctuating exchange rate  |
| Flight to the UK                         | £ 750          | £ -          | Approx cost of single flight from Sydney to Heathrow for April 2022  |
| Airport transfer on arrival              | £ 50           | £ -          | Approx cost  |
| Accommodation Support / settling package | £ 1,500        | £ -          | 3 months paid accommodation on arrival - Approx cost   |
| UK Driving Licence Application           | £ -            | £ 43         |  |
| UK Driving Lessons                       | £ 300          | £ -          | Approx cost of 10 lessons  |
| UK Driving Test (Practical & Theory)     | £ -            | £ 85         | Cost of one UK Theory Test and one UK practical Driving Test   |
| UK Cat C1 Driving Test/CPC               | £ 264          | £ -          | Cost of one UK Cat C1 (Ambulance) Driving Test and CPC exams   |
|  | £ -            | £ -          | <b>Costs not included:</b><br>- Paramedic's salary<br>- Trust staff costs for recruitment and pastoral support activities and training costs |
| <b>Total Cost</b>                        | <b>£ 6,835</b> | <b>£ 128</b> |  |

The approx. total cost to the Ambulance Trust, excluding staff time, is **£6,835** per Paramedic recruited. Funding is available to off-set some of these costs and to provide infrastructure funding as detailed below.

### Funding available

For the pilot phase – that is for any overseas Paramedic made a job offer through this Programme before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, the Ambulance Trust will receive the following funding upon the Paramedic's arrival in the UK:

- £6,000 per person paid to the Trust to off-set recruitment costs
- £500 per person paid to the Trust ring-fenced for education
- £540 per person paid to the Trust to be reimburse to the candidates their HCPC application fees