

Podiatry International Recruitment – Programme Pilot

Podiatry International Recruitment Programme – Pilot

Health Education England (HEE) are committing monies from this year's Comprehensive Spending Review settlement to address identified workforce shortages in the Podiatry profession. HEE are looking to develop a robust offering of international recruitment of podiatrists 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 Podiatrists from Spain. We are hopeful that this work will be the first of several work packages to address the Podiatry workforce shortage.

This paper outlines the proposed pilot, its rationale and the steps required by NHS Podiatry 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 31st March 2022.

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

- Podiatrists are trained to a similar standard to UK-educated Podiatrists and can meet HCPC registration requirements
- Podiatrists 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 Podiatrists (that is, the country/region trains more Podiatrists than their domestic services require)
- There is a history of migration from the identified country or region to the UK

Our analysis of potential countries resulted in **Spain** 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 NQPs graduating from Spanish 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 Spanish Universities
- English is a commonly spoken second language in Spain and we are hopeful a good number of candidates will be able to pass an IELTS/TOEFL qualification
- There is a high annual number of NQP's in Spain. Many must relocate/migrate in search of employment after graduation and therefore an opportunity of a secure career in the NHS would be an attractive offer

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- The opportunity to work in the NHS and carry out further research is seen as gold standard in Spain
- Spanish graduates tend to be young and therefore more likely to be willing to travel for work, and less likely to be tied by family/young children
- This could be a beneficial experience for Spain who are trying to build a podiatry service for their own public health system

The pilot will be fully evaluated and – subject to future funding – potentially continued on an annual basis.

Proposed Pilot

The pilot will recruit Newly Qualified Podiatrists from Spain into pre-agreed NHS Podiatry 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 Podiatry Trust. At the end of the initial 3-year contract the NHS Podiatry Trust will be able to offer a contract extension and Visa sponsorship extension if desired by both the Trust and the Podiatrist.

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 Podiatry 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 Spanish Council of Podiatry are also engaged, and HEE are developing relationships with some of the Universities in Spain offering Podiatry programmes.

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Indicative Timescales

	2021	2022								Post Pilot
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	
Formulation of International Recruitment Pathway Pilot										
Identification/selection of NHS Trusts to become Project Partners										
Identification/engagement of overseas Partners										
Opportunity promoted to relevant overseas Podiatrists / applications invited to join the Programme										
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 Trust (usually 4-5 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 Podiatrist) 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 Podiatry Trusts, HCPC, UK Visa & Immigration Service, Spanish Council of Deans for Podiatry and the Consejo General de Colegios Oficiales de Podologos de Espania, Spanish Universities and DVLA.
- Market the programme and act as first point of contact
- Manage the applications process
- Provide support and guidance to partner Podiatry 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 Podiatry Trust and book flights
- Conduct an evaluation of the Programme and disseminate findings
- Ensure there is a clear reporting and Governance structure in place

Podiatry Trusts Input

The partner Podiatry 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 Podiatrists for 3 months upon arrival
- Provide an appropriate induction and Newly Qualified Podiatry Programme
- Provide ongoing pastoral and professional support

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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	Podiatrist	Notes
English Language Training	£ -	£ 500	Assumes average level of English Language Training required
English Language Exam Cost		£ 195	
HCPC Application Fee	£ 540	£ -	Initially paid by Podiatrist. 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 Government	£ 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	£ 150	£ -	Approx. cost
Airport transfer on arrival	£ 50	£ -	Approx. cost
Accommodation Support / settling package	£ 1,500	£ -	3 months paid accommodation on arrival - Approx. cost
	£ -	£ -	Costs not included: - Podiatrist's salary - Trust staff costs for recruitment and pastoral support activities and training costs
Total Cost	£ 5,671	£ 695	

The approx. total cost to the Podiatry Trust, excluding staff time, is **£5,671** per Podiatrist 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 Podiatrist made a job offer through this Programme before 31st March 2022, the Podiatry Trust will receive the following funding upon the Podiatrist’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