What happens when a Health and Care visa ends?

Your visa expiry and what it means for your right to work

When a Health and Care visa comes to an end, the immediate change is your permission to stay in the UK. You can no longer work for your sponsor, and your access to public funds and the NHS surcharge refund also stops. But the situation is not always the same for everyone. It depends on whether you plan to leave, apply for a new visa, or switch to another immigration route.

If you are still in the UK when the visa expires and you have not submitted a new application, you become an overstayer. That can affect future visa applications and may lead to removal proceedings. The Home Office expects you to leave the country unless you have a valid reason to stay and an application in progress. Understanding the options before the expiry date is important so you can plan your next move.

One common step is to apply for a new visa under a different category if your circumstances have changed. For example, you might qualify for a Skilled Worker visa with a different employer, or you might switch to a family visa if you have a partner or child who is a British citizen or settled person. Each route has its own requirements, and the transition must happen before your current leave runs out.

Options after your sponsored employment ends

If your job finishes early, your sponsor must report the end of your employment to the Home Office within a certain period. At that point, your visa will normally be curtailed, meaning it will be cut short. The Home Office will write to you with a new expiry date, usually 60 days from the date of the letter. During that period you can look for a new sponsor or apply to switch to another visa category.

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If you find a new employer who holds a sponsor licence and is willing to assign a Certificate of Sponsorship, you can apply for a new Skilled Worker visa without leaving the UK. The new role must meet the same salary threshold and occupation code requirements as the original visa. The genuine vacancy test still applies, so the job must be real and the salary must be at the going rate for that occupation.

Another route is to switch to a Health and Care visa with a different employer in the health or social care sector. The same rules about salary, genuine vacancy, and the sponsor licence

apply. If you are a medical professional, you may also qualify for the Global Talent visa, but that requires an endorsement from a recognised body.

If you cannot find a new sponsor or switch to another visa category before your leave expires, you may need to leave the UK. Overstaying is a breach of immigration law and can make it harder to return in the future. The Home Office keeps a record of overstayers, and a future visa application may ask about previous immigration history.

The role of the sponsor licence and compliance duties

Your employer holds a sponsor licence, which comes with compliance duties. They must keep records of your right to work, report any changes in your employment, and pay the immigration skills charge when they assign a Certificate of Sponsorship. If they fail to meet these duties, the Home Office can suspend or revoke their licence, which affects all sponsored workers at that organisation.



When your employment ends, your sponsor must report it using the Home Office online system. They do not have a choice in this. The report triggers the curtailment process. You should receive a letter from the Home Office with a new expiry date, but it is wise to check your

visa status online as well. If you do not receive a letter, contact the Home Office or seek legal advice to confirm your position.

The compliance duties also apply to you. You must inform the Home Office if you change employer or if your personal details change. Keeping your contact details up to date ensures you receive any correspondence about your visa status.

If you are considering a new job, check whether the employer has a sponsor licence. You can search the Home Office register of licensed sponsors online. The new employer must also assign a Certificate of Sponsorship to you before you can apply. That certificate confirms the job details, the occupation code, and the salary. The salary must meet the minimum threshold for your role and for the visa route you are using.

Switching to a different visa category

If you are a Health and Care visa holder and your employment ends, you may be able to switch to another visa category. The most common alternatives are the Skilled Worker visa (with a different employer), the family visa, or the Global Talent visa if you qualify. Each route has its own application form, fee, and evidence requirements.

Switching to a family visa is possible if you have a partner or parent who is a British citizen, a person with indefinite leave to remain, or a refugee or person with humanitarian protection. You will need to show that you have a genuine relationship and that you meet the financial requirement. The financial requirement is usually a minimum income level, but there are exceptions if you receive certain benefits.

If you switch to a Skilled Worker visa, the new employer must assign a Certificate of Sponsorship. The role must be at RQF level 3 or above, and the salary must be at least the general salary threshold or the going rate for the occupation, whichever is higher. For Health and Care visa holders, the salary threshold is lower than the general threshold, but the new role must still meet the specific requirements for that occupation code.

Another option is to apply for indefinite leave to remain if you have been in the UK for five years on a Health and Care visa. If your visa is about to expire and you are close to completing five years, you might be able to apply for settlement before the expiry date. That would give you permanent residence and remove the need for a sponsor.

If you are not eligible for any of these routes, you may need to leave the UK and apply for a new visa from your home country. That can be a longer process, and you will need to meet the requirements for the visa you want. Some routes, such as the Standard Visitor visa, do not allow work, so you would need to find an employer who can sponsor you before you apply.

For anyone facing the end of their sponsored employment, seeking professional advice can help clarify the options. Adamir Immigration Solicitors London provides UK immigration and nationality advice, including guidance on switching visas and dealing with curtailment. Their team can explain the steps based on your personal circumstances and help you prepare a new application if one is possible.

Practical steps to take before your visa expires

- Check the expiry date on your Biometric Residence Permit or digital status. Set a reminder at least two months before that date.
- If your employment ends early, ask your employer when they will report it to the Home Office. Keep a record of any correspondence.
- Start looking for a new sponsor or alternative visa route as soon as you know your job is ending. Do not wait for the curtailment letter.
- Gather your documents: passport, BRP, payslips, bank statements, marriage or birth certificates if relevant, and any correspondence from the Home Office.
- If you need to switch to a family visa, check the financial requirement and start collecting evidence of your relationship and income.

Taking these steps early gives you time to prepare a complete application and reduces the risk of overstaying. If you are unsure about the requirements for a new visa, speak to a qualified immigration adviser before you submit the application.

What happens if you overstay

Overstaying your visa is a civil offence under the Immigration Act 2014. It can lead to a ban on re-entering the UK for up to ten years, depending on the length of overstay and the circumstances. The Home Office can also detain and remove overstayers. If you overstay for less than 30 days and leave voluntarily, the ban may be shorter, but any overstay can affect future applications.

If you have a pending application with the Home Office, your stay is considered lawful while the application is being decided. That means you can remain in the UK even after your visa expires, as long as the application was submitted before the expiry date. The application must be valid and complete. If the Home Office rejects it as invalid, your overstay period starts from the date your visa expired.



If you are in the UK and your visa has expired, you should not work. Working without permission is a criminal offence and can lead to prosecution. It can also make it harder to apply for a new visa in the future.

The Home Office has a process for voluntary return, which can be a better option than waiting for removal. Voluntary return allows you to leave the UK at your own expense, and it may reduce the length of any re-entry ban. You can apply for a voluntary return scheme through the Home Office.

Getting advice on your specific situation

Each case is different, and the right course of action depends on your immigration history, your family ties in the UK, and your career plans. What works for one person may not work for another. If you are unsure about your options, speaking to a solicitor can help you make an informed decision. **Adamir Immigration Solicitors London** offers consultations on UK immigration matters, including what to do when a visa ends. Their lawyers can assess your eligibility for a new visa and help you prepare the application.

When your Health and Care visa ends, you have a limited time to act. Whether you choose to find a new sponsor, switch to a different visa, or leave the UK, the key is to plan ahead and avoid overstaying. The rules are detailed, and missing a deadline can have serious consequences. Knowing what to expect and what steps to take gives you the best chance of a smooth transition.

Adamir Immigration Solicitors London is located at Unit-1, 5 Norman Rd, London N15 4ND, UK, and can be reached at +44 20 3302 0074.