



## **WELCOME TO GREAT BRITAIN!**

### **A RAPID REFERENCE GUIDE FOR EUROPEAN NURSES INTERESTED IN WORKING IN THE UK**

Draga Candidat,

Multumim foarte mult pentru interesul in Acqua Dolce Ltd si pentru ca ne-ai ales sa te ajutam in cautarea unui loc de munca potrivit in Marea Britanie.

Intelegem in totalitate cat de importanta este decizia de a te muta in alta tara.

Este o decizie dificila si probabil ca te astepti sa intampini multe provocari in viitor.

Dar noi putem sa te ajutam cu intregul proces si sa facem ca aceste provocari sa fie mult mai usoare.

Documentul de mai jos iti ofera cateva informatii esentiale de care vei avea nevoie la inceputul acestei noi experiente.

Te rugam sa citesti cu atentie si sa nu eziti sa ne contactezi cu orice intrebari ai avea.

Te intrebi de ce aceasta scrisoare este in limba romana in timp ce documentul este in limba engleza?

Pur si simplu deoarece este necesar sa poti vorbi, citi si intelege limba engleza la un nivel conversational pentru a putea sa lucrezi ca asistent in Marea Britanie.

Deci intelegerea acestui document in limba engleza este prima provocare!

Iti dorim mult succes si ne bucuram sa lucram impreuna.

Toate cele bune,

**Echipa Acqua Dolce.Ltd**

## How recruitment agencies work in the UK

There are a number of different ways that UK recruitment agencies can help EU nurses find employment in the UK.

Acqua Dolce Ltd works in accordance with the instructions of our clients (UK hospitals, nursing home groups and other types of healthcare providers) who want to recruit nurses on a **permanent** basis. We do not place candidates on temporary or contract assignments.

Therefore Acqua Dolce Ltd will not be your employer in the UK – we simply introduce appropriate candidates to appropriate clients with appropriate vacancies.

When you register with a UK employment agency such as Acqua Dolce (either direct or through an overseas partner agency) you are giving us authority to present your CV to any of our clients that we think will be interested in your experience and qualifications.

Before we start work on your application we will discuss with you the type of organisation you want to work for and the regions of the UK you would consider. We will also advise you on typical salaries in different areas, accommodation arrangements, professional standards, general working conditions for nurses and the practicalities of relocating to the UK.

With your requirements in mind, we will then start approaching our clients on your behalf.

Some of these clients will have specific vacancies in specific locations. They will consider the CVs they receive from employment agencies as well as their own advertising response and decide which candidates they want to interview. You will almost always be in competition with other candidates for these vacancies.

Some clients will choose to work with a small number of approved agencies who submit candidates to them whether or not there is a specific vacancy. This happens where the client concerned is continually recruiting nurses and is always interested in good candidates from agencies they trust. Clearly, there is less individual competition in these circumstances.

Either of these processes can take some time. Unless the client has a particularly urgent requirement they may take a few days or even weeks to consider all the CVs presented to them.

If you don't hear from us for a little while it does not mean we have forgotten about you!

## No charges by UK / EU agencies

Employment agencies in the UK (or anywhere else in the EU) are not permitted to charge candidates registration fees or demand any other payment from candidates in order to find them work apart from payments for strictly controlled additional services such as translations or CV preparation.

Acqua Dolce Ltd makes no charges to candidates in any circumstances – our services to you are entirely free.

## The NMC application process, PIN numbers, etc:

In order to practice as a Nurse in the UK you will need a PIN number from the UK Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC). Full details on how to apply for a PIN are on the NMC website ([www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org)) and Acqua Dolce can also provide a free detailed advice sheet on how to complete the application forms successfully (use the contact details at the end of this document to get in touch with us).

There are 3 possible “routes” to getting a PIN as a general nurse:

AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION - If you started your nurse training after certain reference dates (which are different from country to country) your qualification is automatically recognised and accepted by the NMC. All you need to do to get a PIN is to follow the application procedure correctly and provide certified evidence of your qualification as a general nurse.

The reference date for **Romania** and **Bulgaria** is 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007.

The date for **Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia** and **Slovenia** is 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004.

The date for **Spain** and **Portugal** is 1<sup>st</sup> January 1986.

ACQUIRED RIGHTS - If you started your nurse training before the dates referred to above you can apply for a PIN under Acquired Rights or General Systems (see below).

An Acquired Rights application will involve providing evidence in the form of a certificate from your “home competent authority” (the nursing authority in your country) that you have practised as a nurse for 3 consecutive years within the last 5 in the country in which you qualified.

However, if you qualified in Romania as “certificate de competente profesionale de asistent medical generalist” or in Poland as “dyplom pielęgniarki albo pielęgniarki dyplomowanej” you will need to prove 5 years out of the last 7.

You will also need to provide evidence of your qualification itself certified by your home competent authority.

**GENERAL SYSTEMS** – If you don't fall under the criteria for Automatic Recognition or Acquired Rights you can apply for consideration under General Systems.

This route means that the NMC will assess you individually and to do this they will need the following:

- A certificate from your home competent authority confirming your qualification and also that your training is equivalent to 11(c)(i) of Directive 2005/36/EC. Don't worry if you don't know what this is – your competent authority will!
- An official transcript of your training – again you get this from your competent authority. The transcript will confirm the number of hours you have spent studying each subject and your clinical experience on each subject. Overall the combination of your certified theoretical and practical instruction needs to add up to a minimum of 4,600 hours.
- A police check from the police in your country.

### **Working in the UK while waiting for a PIN number:**

The PIN application process for “automatic recognition” candidates can take some time to complete – up to 12 weeks from the point at which you submitted your application. If there are any complications – maybe you misunderstood a question or didn't submit a correct document - it could be longer.

Some UK employers are prepared to recruit “automatic recognition” EU nurses to work in a more junior role while they wait for their PIN numbers to be issued. This means working as a Senior Carer or Preceptorship Nurse with immediate promotion to a Nurse when your PIN arrives.

The advantages of this are that it enables you to start work in the UK at an earlier stage, start earning some money and gain valuable “on the job” experience for a little while before taking on the full responsibilities of a nurse role.

Obviously, the disadvantage is that the hourly rate paid to a Senior Carer is less than that of a Nurse! However, it shouldn't be too long until your PIN arrives and you get the higher nursing rate. In some cases the PIN might arrive before you start work anyway so you would go straight in on the Nurse's salary.

There is nothing to stop an “acquired rights” nurse from coming to the UK as a Senior Carer and going through the PIN application process in the same way as an “automatic recognition” nurse as described above.

However, from the UK employer's point of view, acquiring a PIN is not guaranteed to acquired rights candidates so your employment would be on the understanding that it is a

Senior Carer only role until such time as the PIN is acquired. Also, once the PIN is acquired the promotion to Nurse would depend on the availability of a suitable position.

### **Starting the PIN process as early as possible:**

Once you have made your decision to follow your career in the UK, it is obviously to your great advantage to get started on the PIN application process as quickly as possible.

If you come to the UK as a Senior Carer, the sooner you get your PIN the sooner you get the promotion up to Nurse (and a much higher salary!).

### **PRN numbers:**

Often the cause of confusion, a PRN number is not the same as a PIN number! It is a “Pre Recognition Number” which is issued once the NMC have received your initial request for an application pack. The PRN is essentially a reference number which enables you to check the progress of your PIN application at any time.

There is no cost involved in acquiring a PRN – this part of the application process is free.

From the UK employer’s point of view, having a PRN is very important. It shows them that you are serious and that you are on your way towards getting a PIN.

### **Cost of acquiring a PIN:**

The NMC will require you to pay a £110 assessment fee when you send your completed application pack to them.

You will also need to get various documents certified and translated before you can send them to the NMC – this can be done in your own country so should not be too expensive.

Once the NMC has approved your application they will require a further payment of £100 before they will issue you with your PIN. This is the annual NMC membership fee and it has to be paid each year..

### **What if I cannot afford to pay £210 until I have earned some money in the UK?**

Some of our UK clients will still be interested in you because they know you will get a PIN eventually. So you can come and work for them as a Senior Carer, save up a bit of money and then submit your application to the NMC when you are ready. It just takes a little longer this way.

The best way to approach this is to get a PRN and have all your documentation prepared and ready to submit to the NMC as soon as you can afford the first £110. If you can show

the prospective UK employer that you are ready to start the PIN application as soon as possible they will take you much more seriously.

You need to see the situation from the UK employer's point of view – your true value to them is as a Nurse, not as a Carer.

### **Hospital or Nursing Home?**

We understand entirely why some nurses would only ever want to work in a hospital setting.

But there are some very good reasons why starting off your career in the UK by gaining experience in a nursing home first could be a good idea – especially if you have qualified only recently.

With one or two year's UK nursing home experience behind you, your CV could look a lot more attractive to a hospital employer than as a newly qualified nurse. You would also have one or two more year's experience of speaking and writing English in a medical environment – something that a UK hospital employer would always consider very important.

However, many of the recently qualified European nurses we place with progressive, expanding UK nursing home groups find that their careers have really “taken off” within one or two years and have forgotten why they were interested in hospital jobs in the first place!

### **London or elsewhere?**

The majority of young, recently qualified European nurses we interview will answer “London” when we ask them where they want to work in the UK.

We don't blame them – it's a fabulous city!

However, the fact is that the majority of them will end up working away from London. The reason is very simple – living costs.

London is a very special place with its own very special local economy, particularly with regard to accommodation costs and property rentals which are way higher than anywhere else in the UK. It is certainly true that salaries for nurses are higher in London but £2.00 or £3.00 per hour more than you might earn elsewhere are unlikely to cover those extra costs.

The other simple fact is that the UK is a fairly small country with quite good communications by road, rail and air. Many of these transport systems begin and end in London. So it is entirely possible to enjoy London from more or less anywhere in the UK – you don't have to live there!

## **Your employment contract and conditions of work in the UK:**

As mentioned previously, neither Acqua Dolce Ltd or our overseas partner companies will be your employer in the UK. Your employment contract will be with whichever UK client of Acqua Dolce that you agree to work for.

All our UK clients are respected, established companies who take great care over the welfare, training and working conditions of all their employees, wherever they come from

Inevitably, there will be some variations in the terms and conditions offered by different UK employers.

As a worker in the UK, your overall employment rights are protected by law with regards to aspects such as the minimum wage to which you are entitled, the number of working hours per week that you will be expected to undertake, your health and safety at work, minimum amounts of paid holiday, etc. You can also expect to receive the same terms and conditions that your employer provides to their British employees.

However, no employer offers exactly the same terms and conditions as another and there are often variations in rates of pay around the country - for example, pay is generally higher in London and the South East area but, against this, the cost of living is higher in this region.

The specific terms and conditions of employment that you are being offered will be contained in a letter from your prospective employer offering you the position and (in more detail) in your contract of employment.

Please remember that your employment contract imposes responsibilities on both your employer and yourself. Once the contract is signed, your employer must - by law - adhere to the terms of the contract. This is your protection against unscrupulous behaviour by the employer. However, by signing the contract you are also agreeing to undertake the requirements within the contract with regards to the work you do and the way you do it.

Since your UK employer may incur substantial costs in bringing you to the UK, you might find that your employment contract contains penalty clauses that would apply if you decided to leave your job before completing a minimum of one year's employment. In these circumstances, such clauses might require you to repay some or all the costs involved through deductions from your salary.

Clearly, it is essential that you read the offer letter and / or employment contract carefully and check any aspects that you do not understand before signing. Acqua Dolce or our overseas partner's staff are available at any time to discuss these matters with you and answer any questions you might have before you sign.

Our advice is to consider carefully ALL aspects of any offer you are made – the one offering the highest salary or cheapest accommodation may not automatically be the best one!

### Earnings and tax:

UK salary levels in the nursing and care sectors are not fixed and will vary between different employers. With national employers, who operate from a number of sites around the country, the rates of pay may also vary from site to site as local labour rates vary between regions.

However, strong competition in the UK labour market ensures that employers always have to pay sufficiently attractive rates to recruit the staff they need. This includes employees from overseas who will be paid at the same level as comparable UK employees.

Your salary will be paid monthly “in arrears” - this means you receive your pay after you have completed each month’s work. Some employers will pay by the calendar month i.e. 12 times per year; others will pay on a 4 weekly basis i.e. 13 times per year.

Your employer will be required to make various deductions from your salary each month – these deductions will be clearly identified on a monthly pay slip. The deductions may vary according to individual circumstances but will include:

#### INCOME TAX

The exact amount of Income Tax that you will pay in the UK depends on a number of factors including the personal tax code that you will be allocated by the UK tax authority (HMRC). However, you can generally expect to have 20% of your gross annual earnings over £10,000 deducted as Income Tax. Therefore, if your annual salary is £25,000 you will pay 20% of £15,000. Full details are available at: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/intro-income-tax.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/incometax/intro-income-tax.htm)

#### NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

The UK’s National Health Service (NHS) is mainly funded by contributions deducted from the salaries of the workforce as well as from employers. You will pay 12% of your weekly earnings between £111 and £805. Full details are available at: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/ni/intro/basics.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/ni/intro/basics.htm).

So, an approximate example of typical earnings and deductions based on an annual salary of £25,000 paid 12 times per year would be as follows:

Gross monthly salary	2,083
Less:	
Income tax	250
N.H.I.	177
	<u>427</u>
Net monthly income	£1,656

As soon as you start work your employer will be required to register you with HMRC. This will involve a short interview at a local tax office where you will be asked to provide suitable ID e.g. passport, national identity card, etc.

### **Opening a bank account:**

Your employer can only pay you by cheque or - more usually - by electronic transfer (BACS) into a bank account. It will not be possible to pay you in cash. It is therefore essential that you set up a bank account as soon as possible after you have arrived - your employer will help you to do so.

In order to open an account for you, the bank will need to see original copies of your passport and one other form of identification such as your identity card or your birth certificate.

The bank will also need a copy of your employment contract and confirmation of your address in the UK. This confirmation could either be a utility bill showing your address or a letter from your employer confirming where you live.

Finally, the bank will want a brief letter from your employer confirming that you are in full time employment with them, the amount of your salary and the method of payment of your salary into the bank (BACS or cheque). The bank will then issue you with the necessary documents and cards that will enable you to withdraw money from an ATM.

### **Accommodation:**

Your UK accommodation will usually be organised in advance of your arrival by your employer who will attempt to find the best price for you and a location as close as possible to your place of work. There are different ways in which these arrangements might be made.

For example, some of our UK clients might be able to offer you on-site staff accommodation. In this case, your employer is also your landlord and the cost of your rent will be deducted from your salary.

In other cases, your employer might offer to arrange temporary accommodation for you (say 1 – 3 months) whilst you make your own longer term arrangements. Or maybe the employer will take on a lease of a suitable property and charge you for the rent through salary deductions.

Whether you pay rent to your employer or to a private landlord there will usually be a requirement to pay a deposit (typically one month's rent) as well as the first month's rent in advance. If this is a problem for you your employer may offer to pay these amounts on your behalf and reclaim them from your salary over a period of time.

Accommodation prices will vary considerably depending on the region where you will be living, with the London area being the most expensive. Accommodation becomes a lot cheaper if you are prepared to share a room.

If you are renting your own property, as well as the rent, you will also be required to pay local Council tax and utility bills such as gas, electricity, etc. You will also be responsible for keeping the property you are renting clean and in good order - landlords always impose financial penalties for any damage or cleaning costs they may incur during your tenancy (hence the deposit!).

### **Partners and Families – Husbands, Wives, Boyfriends, Girlfriends, Children, etc**

Please remember that your UK employer has recruited YOU – not your family as well!

The usual arrangement is for you to take the accommodation that the employer has arranged for you and then, if necessary, look around for something suitable for you and your partner and / or children who can follow you to the UK later.

### **How much money do I need to bring with me?**

Some of your costs of coming to work in the UK will have to be paid before you leave e.g. your travel to the UK, the cost of translating and certifying documents, etc.

However, your employer can probably help you with some of the other big amounts once you have arrived which will mainly be the deposit and first month's rent on your accommodation. The help will be in the form of an advance on your salary which you can pay back over a period of time.

Your employer might also be able to help with a further advance on your salary to cover your living costs until your first pay gets to your bank account.

Most UK employers pay salaries at the end of the month so if you started work near the beginning of a month you might need to cover 3 or 4 weeks living expenses.

You should probably budget for around £50 per week living expenses.

Obviously, it would be best if the amount you need as an advance to “borrow” from your employer is kept to a minimum.

### **Cost of living in the UK:**

As you are no doubt aware, you will find prices in general and the overall cost of living in the UK a great deal higher than in Central and Eastern Europe although salaries are, of course, also commensurately higher. However, a little local knowledge will often go a long

way in terms of finding cheaper alternatives for most goods and services. We strongly suggest that you ask your British colleagues for advice before buying anything!

Here is a good example:

If you wanted to travel from Bristol to London by train during “peak hours” (6.30 – 10.00 a.m.) and you bought your ticket on the day you travelled it would cost you £96.50 for a single ticket. Outside peak hours it would cost you £31.50.

However, if you booked and paid for your ticket a few days in advance you could reduce these prices by up to 50%.

But if you travelled by coach (which only takes 55 minutes longer than the train) it could cost as little as £7.00.

### **Arrangements for your arrival in the UK:**

You will usually be expected to make your own arrangements to travel to the UK.

Low cost airlines such as Easyjet and Wizzair charge as little as £35 to fly direct to London from many locations in Central / Eastern Europe and the flight time is between 2 and 3 hours. Bus and rail travel is usually more expensive than flying and the journey can take 48 hours.

Usually, the employer will arrange to meet you at the UK arrival airport and provide onward transport to your place of work.

If your place of work is within the London / South East area you can expect an onward journey of 2 - 3 hours drive from Heathrow or Gatwick, a little longer from Luton or Stansted. However, please be prepared for a much longer journey if you are going to the North of England, Wales, the Midlands or the South West (Dorset, Devon, and Cornwall).

If your destination is further North (e.g Manchester, Liverpool) or in Scotland and there are no direct flights to a local airport from your home location you will normally take an internal flight from London which will be paid for by your employer.

### **Induction and further training:**

Within the first two weeks of your employment your employer will arrange an induction training course for yourself and any other new employees. This course will include general information relating to the company you are working for, the standards of work and behaviour on duty that they will expect from you, their operational policies that apply to the job you will be doing (including hygiene and health / safety requirements) and all other aspects of the job that will need covering to enable you to get started.

Further “on the job” training will vary from employer to employer but will include detailed instruction on the specific tasks you are required to carry out, introductions to your Manager and other team members and any other specific requirements that apply to your particular place of work.

Most of our UK clients will offer a structured career path for you to follow and develop. Many of them are expanding businesses who prefer to “promote from within” as their organisations grow.

### **The National Health Service (NHS) and what to do if you become unwell:**

As an EU citizen, when you are resident and working in the UK you are entitled to the same health care facilities provided by the UK’s National Health Service as any other UK citizen. These facilities (except in the case of medical emergencies) are accessed through your local General Practitioner (GP). It is therefore important that you register with your GP as soon as possible after arrival and your employer will assist you with making an appointment for registration. You will need to take with you to the appointment your passport or ID card and confirmation of your UK address.

In the case of medical emergencies (sudden serious illness or physical injury for example) you should dial 999 and ask for an ambulance. If you decide to take a sick or injured person to hospital yourself please be aware that not all hospitals have Accident and Emergency facilities.

Your employer will give you information – probably contained in a Staff Handbook – about what you should do if you become unwell. It is very important that you follow these procedures correctly, particularly with regard to keeping your employer informed about your illness and how long you are likely to be away from work.

### **Currency:**

British currency is the Pound sterling (normally written £) and there are 100 pence (normally written p) to the Pound. You will find notes worth **£50, £20, £10, £5** and coins worth **1p, 2p, 5p, 10p, 20p, 50p, £1 and £2**

At the moment, £1 is worth around 1.30 EURO.

### **Banks:**

Banks close on public holidays and Sundays. Some are open on Saturday mornings. They will change currency and travellers cheques, and normally charge less than Bureaux de

Change. You can find banks in most town centres. the main banks are Barclays, Lloyds, HSBC, National Westminster, Santander and the Royal Bank of Scotland.

### **Driving:**

Your EU / EEA driving licence will be valid in the UK for up to 3 years from the date you become a British resident. After that you will need to exchange it for a British licence.

Any UK registered vehicle used on British roads must be covered by appropriate insurance. It must also have a valid MOT certificate (an annual safety and technical assessment) if it is more than 3 years old and a current Road Fund Licence (an annual tax levied on every vehicle).

Please be aware that any foreign registered vehicle cannot be used on British roads by a British resident. If you have a permanent job and an address in the UK you are a British resident.

Our advice is not to bring a foreign registered car or motorcycle into the UK if you are intending to use it yourself. The penalties for breaching any of the above rules are severe.

### *Speed Limits*

- 30 m.p.h. in towns and villages
- 60 m.p.h. on normal country roads
- 70 m.p.h. on motorway & dual carriageway
- always look for signs that tell of any variance in these limits

### *Parking*

- double yellow lines along the side of the road mean no parking at any time
- single yellow line along the side of the road means you cannot park during the day - a notice will tell you when parking is allowed
- Pay & display (you get a timed ticket from a nearby machine) and parking meters are common
- Penalties are handed out by a separate organisation called Traffic Wardens
- If you transgress parking regulations you may receive a fine or have your car wheel clamped, possibly even towed away. All these penalties are very expensive – be careful!

### *Central London Congestion Charge*

- This applies if you take your car into certain areas of central London. The charge is £10 per day but the penalties for not paying it are substantially more. Full details are available on 0845 900 1234 or [www.cclondon.com](http://www.cclondon.com).

### **Public Transport:**

Britain has an extensive railway network linking all major cities and most medium sized towns. It is much criticised for being unreliable and expensive but works reasonably well for most of the time. If planning a long distance journey by rail you are usually much better off buying your ticket well in advance and researching carefully the discounts on offer. A useful number is National Rail Enquiries on 0845 748 4950.

A much cheaper alternative to travelling by rail between major cities is to go by bus or coach. It takes longer and there is a smaller choice of destinations but the cost is substantially less. A useful number is National Express Coach Services on 08705 808080 ([www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com)).

Details of local bus and rail services or London's underground network can be found in Yellow Pages, local railway or bus stations, libraries or on the internet.

### **Telephones**

Mobile phones and call charges are relatively expensive in the UK but costs can be reduced by choosing carefully between the many different tariffs and packages on offer. Again, your British colleagues could be a good source of information and advice.

UK land line calls are much more expensive between 8 am and 6 p.m. on weekdays. All 0800 numbers are free, but ones that start with a number such as 0890 are not free – these are premium numbers and very expensive.

#### *Special numbers*

Emergency Services 999

UK Operator 100

International Operator 155

### **Postal Services:**

Postage stamps are available at Post Offices (most towns have one on the High Street or in bigger supermarkets), and at sub post offices (these are a quirky but very useful British institution, which brings postal services to small towns, suburbs and villages - the sub-post office will sell many other things too). In addition many newsagents now sell books of stamps as do supermarkets. Post boxes are red, and are fairly easy to find throughout most town centres.

### **Weather:**

The UK climate is completely unpredictable - hence an obsession with weather forecasts.

The British climate is mild and maritime, normally not going much below zero even in the depths of winter, and never much above 25° C in summer. Most of the time it is between 10° and 20° C.

We do not have any really big mountains, but obviously the further north you go and the higher above sea level you go, particularly in winter, then the colder it will be.

However during the main tourist season, the weather is invariably mild (18 to 24° C).

Most people who have not been to the UK before comment on how green it seems when viewed from an aircraft. There is a reason for this – we get a lot of rain!

### **Public Holidays:**

If a public (Bank) holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then the government decrees the following Monday as the holiday

- January 1st, New Years day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday, day after Easter
- The first Monday in May
- The last Monday in May
- The last Monday in August
- Christmas Day, 25th December
- Boxing Day, 26th December
- Scotland and Northern Ireland have slightly different public holidays

British schools have about two weeks off at Christmas and Easter, plus around 6 weeks from mid-July to the end of August. The holiday areas obviously fill up then too.

### **Racial discrimination:**

Britain is a multicultural country and many of the staff, patients or residents that you come into contact with will be of different ethnic origin to your own. You may also find yourself sharing accommodation with people from different racial origins and backgrounds to yourself.

Your employer will be aware of the fact that – unless you have worked abroad before – this may be unfamiliar to you. During your training, your employer will explain their specific policies with regard to racial discrimination, equality and diversity and integration in the workplace as well as any general UK laws on this matter that may apply.

## INTERVIEW GUIDANCE NOTES FOR EUROPEAN NURSES COMING TO WORK IN THE UK

The final stages in your journey to finding work in the UK are interviews with prospective employers – usually on Skype.

Obviously, the interview process is challenging for nurses who do not have English as their 1<sup>st</sup> language. But only challenging - not impossible!

Most UK employers are realistic about what to expect from potential overseas employees.

They do not expect perfect English, perfect experience or perfect understanding of the UK elderly care sector. At this stage, the employer is just trying to find out if the person they are speaking to could communicate effectively with the elderly folk or patients they would be looking after and the colleagues they would be working with.

However, the more understanding and knowledge the interviewee can demonstrate at the interview the more likely the employer is to offer a job. So, a little research beforehand will be of great benefit.

Try and put yourself in the position of the UK employer. Imagine, for example, it is you who owns or manages a nursing / care home in the UK. What would you need your nurses to know about? What questions would you be likely to ask?

As a nurse working in the UK you need to know about the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) which is the organisation governing nursing professional standards, training and education throughout the UK. The website address is [www.nmc-uk.org](http://www.nmc-uk.org).

The other nursing body you need to be aware of is the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) which represents nurses and the nursing profession in general. Their website is [www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)

It is essential that you know something about the primary regulatory authority that controls all aspect of care and social care in the UK. This is the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and their website is [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

All of the above websites have really useful free fact sheets that you can download.

You should also be aware of the main piece of UK government legislation that covers the UK care sector which is the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Lots of information about this can be found at [www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care-act](http://www.gov.uk/health-and-social-care-act)

OK, so you have done your research. What sort of questions might you face in the interview? Here are some possible examples:

- *Can you describe any **emergency** incident that you may have experienced and how you handled it?*

- *How would you deal with a patient who is obviously **confused**?*
- *How would you deal with a **complaint** from a patient or family member?*
- *What do you understand by **accountability**?*
- *How would you define **quality care**?*
- *What do you think **clinical governance** means and what are its 3 main components?*
- *What, in your opinion, are the **necessary qualities** of a good nurse?*
- *How do you **monitor and evaluate** your own professional competence?*
- *What skills do you have that could help you **manage** non-qualified staff?*
- *How would you manage the care of a person with **dementia** who does not want to take medication?*
- *Explain your understanding of **infection control**. What is its importance?*
- *What would you say your **weaknesses** are? Can you give an example of how this weakness may have affected your work at any time?*
- *How do you recognize and cope with **stress**?*
- *Do you understand what "**safeguarding**" is?*
- *Do you know who **CQC** are? Look them up and ensure you understand the guidance they produce.*

### **Final tips on your Skype interview:**

- Please make sure you are at your computer with everything ready, on your own and with no likely distractions in good time for the Skype interview.
- Switch off your mobile phone.
- If you don't fully understand a question ask for clarification before you start answering.
- Speak English as clearly as possible. It often helps to speak more slowly than you would in your own language.
- Remember the name of the person you are talking to!

- Try and relax. The interviewer is not trying to put you under pressure, she or he is just trying to find out what you are like as a person.
- Try and relate your answers to your own experiences wherever possible. Examples of where you did something, said something or thought something connected to the point being discussed are always good.
- The interviewer will know that you will have questions of your own but it is usually best to leave these until later in the conversation.
- If you liked what the interviewer had to say and you are interested in the job try and finish the conversation in as positive a way as possible. Tell the interviewer you enjoyed speaking to her / him and hope to hear from them soon. If the interviewer asks if you would be interested in the job tell her / him how you really feel (including any doubts if you have them – this is a good opportunity to build the relationship).

### **Offers of employment:**

Congratulations! The interview was a success - you have found a UK employer who is interested in you and you are interested in them. The next stage is for them to offer you the job and for you to accept if you are happy with the offer.

Usually, the first stage is for the employer to send you an email with the basic details of what they are offering you – position, salary, hours, holidays, etc. The offer may not have details of accommodation because the accommodation may not exist at this point – that comes later.

The offer may or may not be accompanied by a full contract. If it does not, the contract will follow once you have accepted.

Either way, if you are happy with the basic details you need to email back with your acceptance. If they do not hear from you reasonably quickly they may assume you are not interested and offer the job to someone else.

So, if you have any queries over the offer you need to raise these questions with your recruitment agency and get them answered to your satisfaction as soon as possible.

### **References:**

Almost certainly, any offer you are made will be “subject to references”.

Any UK care or medical sector employer must (by law) obtain 2 satisfactory references on any candidate they wish to recruit so this is really important. It can also be really confusing!

The best people to give you references are your current or most recent employer and the employer before that. Other possibilities could be your university Tutor or some other professional person who knows you (doctor, lawyer, police officer, government official, etc).

The usual procedure is for you to supply the UK employer or the recruitment agency with the names, positions and email addresses of the people who are giving the references. Then the employer or recruitment agency emails the referees direct.

You therefore need to inform your referees that the reference requests will be coming, that they will be in English and that the replies need to be in English. If replying in English is a problem for them maybe you could offer to assist with translation.

Your referee might be asked to complete a standard reference request form supplied by the UK employer or just to write a brief letter.

If it is a reference request form your referee needs to make sure that he or she signs the form when it has been completed, that he or she is clearly identified on the form (including his or her job title) and that his or her contact details are given. If it is possible for the form to be stamped with the official stamp of the company or university that would be very helpful as well.

If it is a letter it needs to be on the official paper of the company or university and all the above applies as well.

Apart from dealing with your NMC application the only other major paperwork you will need to provide to get a job in the UK will be references. Sorry, if you want to work here there is no avoiding them!

### **Other paperwork:**

Fortunately, the rest of the paperwork you will need to do is pretty easy!

We will send you a list of what we require both before and after any interviews are arranged with our clients.

### **Final general advice:**

It is very simple – please be realistic in your expectations!

- An offer of a job by a UK employer is not an invitation to try and negotiate on salary. The employer can only offer you what they are paying similar employees to do the same job. If you don't like what they are offering you can always decline.

- Your overall terms and conditions of employment will be confirmed in writing before you leave. The same applies to your accommodation. But there will inevitably be minor details that will come up after you arrive – be flexible, nothing in life is perfect!
- Your employer will know that one of your main concerns is likely to be money and how you will survive for the first few weeks. That is why they will assist with loans to cover your accommodation deposit and any other reasonable help they can give to get you started. But please be aware that they have other employees to think about as well who are not getting these benefits – they can only go so far.
- Please read the section above about bringing your partner to the UK. Of course it is not easy to leave your loved one behind but the separation need only be for as long as it takes to find suitable accommodation for both of you.
- Accepting an offer and then asking your new employer to find accommodation and / or a job for your partner is generally NOT a good idea!
- It is in the interests of any employment agency you register with to get you interviews and find you a job as quickly as possible – that’s how they get paid! But the process does sometimes take a little time – please be patient.

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