

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson governing body endorsement requests made on or after 1 **June 2026**.

Section 1: Overview of governing body endorsements for the International Sportsperson route of the points-based system

This page provides a brief explanation of what endorsement requirements apply in respect of the International Sportsperson route of the points-based system. The Immigration Rules for the International Sportsperson route can be found at [Appendix International Sportsperson](#).

The **International Sportsperson** route is for elite sportspeople and coaches who:

- are internationally established and whose employment will make a significant contribution to the development of their sport at the highest level in the UK
- who will base themselves in the UK
- will be filling a post that cannot be filled by a suitable British citizen or person who has a right to enter or stay in the UK without restriction.

The application explained: migrants applying to come to the UK under the International Sportsperson route need to be sponsored by an organisation that has an International Sportsperson sponsor licence.

If you wish to sponsor such migrants, you must have a sponsor licence. Before you apply to the Home Office for a licence you must be endorsed by the relevant **sport's governing body** for your sport. This endorsement confirms to the Home Office that the application for a licence is from a genuine sports club (or equivalent) that has a legitimate requirement to bring migrants to the UK as sportspeople. Once licensed, you can assign certificates of sponsorship to a sportsperson or coach with a job offer that allows them to apply for entry clearance or permission to stay in the UK. Each individual must also have personal endorsement from the relevant **approved sport's governing body** for their sport before you assign the certificate of sponsorship.

An **approved sport's governing body** is one specified in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules. Each governing body must be recognised by one of the home-country sports councils such as Sport England and will have been approved by the Home Office before being included in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules.

Sports' governing bodies will work within the Home Office's '[Code of practice for sports governing bodies](#)' and must comply with any immigration regulations, UK legislation and the principles of the points-based system as detailed on the [GOV.UK](#) website.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sponsorship-sporting-code-of-practice>

Length of Endorsement

Governing body endorsements should be issued for a period appropriate to the period of approval for sponsorship, that is:

Type of application	Length of endorsement
Sponsor	Endorsements for sponsors will not have an end date. They will be valid for as long as the sponsor continues to hold a valid sponsor licence.
Migrant	For an initial maximum period of 3 years, with a further extension of a maximum period of 3 years. If the contract is for fewer than 3 years, it will be issued for the length of the contract.

Change of employment

If a migrant is intending to change employer, their new employer must request a new governing body endorsement. The endorsement can be issued for the length of the contract or to the maximum period permitted within the route, whichever is the shorter. The new employer must assign a new certificate of sponsorship to the migrant to allow them to apply to the Home Office for new permission to stay. Permission to stay must be granted before the migrant can start work with the new employer.

Salary

The salary should be agreed as part of the contract between the migrant and the sponsor. For domestic hockey categories this must be equal to or above the annual (or pro-rata) national minimum wage for their age, see <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage>. A

migrant worker must pay tax and national insurance contributions from their earnings and needs to register for a national insurance number. Accommodation can be taken into account when calculating the national living wage. See details including offset rates here <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-accommodation>

Supplementary employment

International Sportsperson migrants are eligible to undertake supplementary employment under the Home Office supplementary employment regulations. The 'Supplementary employment' section [Workers and Temporary Workers: guidance for sponsors - Sponsor an International Sportsperson guidance](#) has more information on this.

Section 2: Requirements

This page explains the England Hockey (EH) requirements under the International Sportsperson route. The requirements are effective from 1 June 2026.

Only the roles listed are eligible for endorsement.

These requirements are only applicable to England and Wales.

Consultation and Review

The Governing Body Endorsement criteria within this document apply only to the 2026-27 season and will be reviewed on an annual basis through consultation with England Hockey League clubs, Area Leagues and the National Game Panel.

Length of season

The season for domestic hockey in general runs from September to May.

Requirements

The tables below show the endorsement requirements for sponsors and migrants.

Category	Requirement
Sponsor	Governing body endorsements for a sponsor licence will only be issued for the following bodies: • England Hockey (EH) and Hockey Wales (HW) • Clubs with teams playing in the relevant gender of England Hockey League Premier Division & Division One North / South.

Migrant International Sportsperson	International Hockey - NGB Performance Director / Coach / Assistant or Specialist	To obtain the governing body endorsement, the individual must meet all of the following requirements and provide evidence to EH of this: • have a minimum of 3 years' coaching experience at i. Senior international level (FIH Hockey Pro League, Hockey World Cup, Continental Championships, Olympic Games) or ii. an elite domestic hockey league in a top 12 Senior World ranked nation iii an elite pathway programme of a top 12 Senior World ranked nation (see https://www.fih.hockey/outdoor-hockey-rankings) • have attained the EH/HW Lead Coach Course / UKCC Level 2 / Level 2 or holds a non-UK qualification valid within the previous four years that is, at the discretion of the NGB, determined to be at least equivalent of this award. Notwithstanding this qualification requirement, if this is the first governing body endorsement application in respect of the Coach, the individual must, before they undertake coaching duties and within 6 weeks of arriving in the UK meet the requirements as below and provide
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		evidence to EH of this prior to any work ○ Successfully completed the EH/HW Recognition of Prior Learning Scheme, this includes - An assessed hockey portfolio and video assessment - Completion of Safeguarding in Hockey workshop - Completion of Planning Safe Hockey module ○ Signed up to EH/HW Code of Conduct ○ Have appropriate insurance ○ An enhanced DBS check For the avoidance of doubt, the coach may not register for, nor participate in England Hockey League or Area league matches or Super 6s (indoor hockey) as a player. Governing body endorsements would normally be issued to coaches for the length of the contract period up to 3 years. Extensions Applications for extensions of governing body endorsements in respect of future seasons after 2026-27 should be made in the same way as an initial application would be made. It will be assessed against the criteria for the relevant season to which the extension applies.
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Migrant International Sportsperson	Domestic Hockey - Player	To obtain governing body endorsement the individual must meet all the following requirements: - the individual must have played for a nation in the Top 25 of the FIH Senior Outdoor World Rankings within the previous <i>24 months</i>, at the time of application (see https://www.fih.hockey/outdoor-hockey-rankings) or - The individual must have played in one or more of the following outdoor tournaments in the previous <i>24 months</i>, for a nation in the relevant Top 12 of the FIH Senior Outdoor World Rankings at the time of application. - U21 World Cup - U21 Continental Championships - U18 European Championships - The club must have demonstrated that there are no suitable resident workers who are qualified to the level above available to do the job. The sponsor will need to provide evidence that the job has been advertised on the EH Website and the club's social media to endeavour to reach suitably qualified residents - The club must provide evidence as required by EH that the individual's salary meets the minimum requirement. - A player must have an up to date No Objection Certificate from their home nation governing body. The player may only play outdoor league matches in England Hockey League Premier
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		Division & Division One North/ South they may not play for clubs lower XIs in England Hockey League Conference Divisions or Area League matches. They may participate in Super 6s (indoor hockey) competitions for their club. For the avoidance of doubt, the player may not coach hockey with this visa. They may assist at their club as a “helper” in line with the Home Office supplementary employment regulations subject to meeting the requirements as below and provide evidence to EH of this prior to any such work: ○ Attended an appropriate EH/HW Coaching workshop (1 or more of - Coaching Junior Hockey, Introduction to Hockey Coaching, Coaching Club Teams) ○ Completed the EH/HW Planning Safe Hockey e-learning module ○ Completed the EH/HW Safeguarding Awareness module ○ Appropriate Insurance cover ○ Enhanced DBS check. Extensions Applications for extensions of governing body endorsements in respect of future seasons after 2026-27 should be made in the same way as an initial application would be made. It will be assessed against the criteria for the relevant season to which the extension applies.
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Migrant International Sportsperson	Domestic Hockey - Coach	To obtain governing body endorsement, the individual must meet all the following requirements and provide evidence to EH of this: • have attained the England Hockey /Hockey Wales Lead Coach Course / UKCC Level 2 / Level 2, or holds a non-UK qualification that is, at the discretion of the NGB, determined to be at least equivalent of this award Coach. Notwithstanding this qualification requirement, if this is the first governing body endorsement application in respect of the Coach, the individual must, before they undertake coaching duties and within 6 weeks of arriving in the UK meet the requirements as below and provide evidence to EH of this prior to any work ○ Successfully completed the England Hockey Recognition of Prior Learning Scheme, this includes - An assessed hockey portfolio and video assessment - Completion of Safeguarding in Hockey workshop - Completion of Planning Safe Hockey module ○ Signed up to EH/HW Code of Conduct ○ Must hold the England Hockey Membership, including appropriate insurance ○ An enhanced DBS check – if working with any Under 18s • The club must have demonstrated that there are no suitable resident workers who are qualified to the level above available to do the job. The sponsor will need to provide evidence that the job has been advertised on the EH Website and the club's social media to endeavour to reach suitably qualified residents
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		The club must provide evidence, as required by EH, that the individual's salary meets the minimum requirement. As part of the advertised role a coach must be paid to coach a club team playing outdoor league matches in all divisions of the England Hockey League and may not coach a club lower XIs in Area League matches. They may coach a club adult team in Super 6s (indoor hockey) competitions For the avoidance of doubt, the coach may not register for, nor participate in England Hockey League or Area league matches or Super 6s (indoor hockey) as a player. Governing body endorsements would normally be issued to coaches for the length of the contract period up to 3 years. Extensions Applications for extensions of governing body endorsements in respect of future seasons after 2026-27 should be made in the same way as an initial application would be made. It will be assessed against the criteria for the relevant season to which the extension applies.
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Migrant International Sportsperson	Domestic Hockey - Player/Coach	To obtain governing body endorsement the individual must meet all of the requirements of both the coach and player categories as above.
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Injuries, Absences, and Suspensions

The appearance requirements in these criteria have been drafted at a level which takes into account the fact an individual may have been unavailable for selection during the relevant time periods for a variety of reasons (for example due to injury; a period of maternity or paternity leave; serious illness or any legitimate medical reasons; bereavement; or family crisis).

In order to obtain the governing body endorsement, the individual must not be subject to a provisional suspension or any unexpired period of ineligibility from playing and/ or coaching activities in any jurisdiction as a result of being charged with or found guilty of a corruption offence and/ or a doping offence and/ or another misconduct offence pursuant to (or recognised under) the applicable Codes, Rules and Regulations of EH or FIH.

Further information

This information is available on the following websites of the NGBs – www.englandhockey.co.uk, www.welsh-hockey.co.uk, www.scottish-hockey.org.uk

For any queries relating to the requirements or the endorsement process and/or to apply for an endorsement please contact the relevant NGB as below:

A. from clubs playing in the England Hockey League

Jo Thomas-Ellis
England Hockey
Bisham Abbey NSC
Nr Marlow
SL7 1RR
Tel: 01628 897500
Email: jo.thomas-ellis@englandhockey.co.uk

B. from clubs Affiliated to Hockey Wales

Paul Whapham
Hockey Wales
Sport Wales National Sports Centre
Sophia Gardens
Cardiff
CF11 9SW
Tel: 02920334909
Email: paul.whapham@hockeywales.org.uk

C. From clubs affiliated to Scottish Hockey

Derek Keir
Scottish Hockey
Glasgow National Hockey Centre
8 Kings Drive
Glasgow
G40 1HB
Tel: 01415505999
Email: derek.keir@scottish-hockey.org.uk

Information on visas and immigration is available on the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website.

Governing Body Endorsement Appeals Procedure

Dispute handling procedures

Any appeals against decisions by the groups will be referred to the Management Boards of the relevant NGB who each have an Appeal Panel to consider Appeals.

Where an application for a migrant covered by the requirements for a governing body endorsement as set out for International Sportsperson has been refused on the grounds that the migrant fails to meet the published requirements, the sponsor may seek a review of the application. The sponsor will have 28 days to request such a review. In these cases, the NGB will refer the sponsor's evidence to an independent panel as set out below.

Where possible the sponsor's supporting evidence will be sent to the panel in advance for their consideration to allow an informed decision.

Sponsors should note that, in respect of any application, there will only be one panel available, and the decision of the panel is final.

Sponsors should therefore ensure that all evidence it wishes to present in support of its application is presented to the panel. If the sponsor has previously made an application that was unsuccessful at panel a further panel cannot be requested for the same player during the season unless his status changes and he meets the requirements whereby a new application can be submitted.

a. The Review

The request for a review may only be made by the sponsor for whom the governing body endorsement has been initially rejected by the NGB.

A review shall be commenced by the appellant lodging with the NGB and a notice of appeal within 28 days of the decision appealed against. The notice of appeal shall

- i. set out details of the decision appealed against and, if the whole of the decision is not appealed against, identify that part of it which is appealed against;
- ii. set out in full grounds of appeal and an appellant shall not be entitled to rely in any ground of appeal not set out in the notice of appeal; and
- iii. be accompanied by a deposit of £150. The panel shall have discretion as to whether the deposit is returned.

The procedure for appeal will be in accordance with the NGB which shall be comprised as detailed below.

b. The Panel

The panel will be appointed by the NGB. The appointed panel shall consist of the NGB's standard Appeal Panel personnel.

c. Power of the Panel

An endorsement request may be refused if the migrant does not meet the relevant criteria set out in this document or fails to provide the mandatory documents. The NGB will notify a migrant in writing of any endorsement request which is refused setting out the reasons for refusal.

An individual shall have 28 days from the date of the written refusal to submit an appeal in writing to the NGB. An individual may only appeal on the basis that the NGB have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

The Panel shall consider the appeal and any evidence submitted in support and shall, as far as practicably possible, within 7 working days of the receipt of the appeal, notify the migrant of its decision.

d. The Decision

The panel will make a decision using the above criteria which shall be final and binding.