

The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP
Home Secretary
Sent by email

Thursday, 27 November 2025

Dear Home Secretary,

Earned Settled Status and Social Workers

Firstly, please accept my congratulations on your appointment to the role of Home Secretary. We have engaged with your predecessors primarily on matters related to unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and we recognise the significance of the challenges facing the Home Office.

Secondly, we note with interest the plans for earned settlement. We have views on aspects of the plans, and we will respond to the formal consultation, but we are first seeking clarification on how the proposals would affect registered social workers. The published documents refer to “minus 5 years if the applicant has been employed in a specific public service occupation for 5 years”. There is no further clarity on which professions are defined as a ‘public service occupation’. Can you please confirm that registered social workers would be eligible for the 5-year reduction as social work is a skilled front facing public service occupation?

As you will be aware, the title of ‘social worker’ is protected in law across the UK and social workers need qualifications from approved social work courses determined by the regulator in order to qualify. Social workers have distinct legal duties (enshrined in a variety of laws both UK-wide and nation specific) which address a range of responsibilities such as the safeguarding of children, supporting people with mental illness, working people with learning disabilities, and upholding the rights of older people and those who may lack mental capacity. Many social workers come to the UK on visas to work, and a change to their routes to settlement may have a large impact on the workforce.

It is with this in mind, that we request that social workers are included in the list of professions that are entitled to minus 5 years off the baseline qualifying period under the new proposals.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Sam Baron

Interim Chief Executive, and National Director for Wales and England
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