

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson Governing Body Endorsement requests made on or after 19 February 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 process 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 **approved 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 a personal endorsement from the **approved governing body** for their sport before you assign the certificate of sponsorship.

An **approved governing body** is one specified in [Appendix Sports Governing Bodies](#) of the Immigration Rules. Such a 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.

Approved 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.

Length of endorsement

Governing body endorsements will 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. To ensure endorsements for International Sportspeople are only issued to sponsors who remain eligible as per the criteria, current sponsors will be required to apply to their discipline every 4 years for a letter of confirmation that their membership is up to date and their discipline are happy for them to remain as sponsors of International Sportspeople. This letter must be sent to the BHS to add to the sponsors file who will charge an administration fee.
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. This and the other conditions of employment should be at least equal to those normally given to a resident worker for the type of work undertaken.

Supplementary employment

International Sportspeople 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 Sportspeople guidance](#) has more information on this.

British Horse Society Governing Body Endorsement Requirements



Compliance with the Code of Practice for Sports Governing Bodies

In reviewing this criteria, the British Horse Society confirm we have reread the Code and agree to our roles and responsibilities as set out within. We confirm we have acted in full compliance with the principles of the Code during this annual review.

Section 2: Requirements

This page explains the British Horse Society (BHS) requirements for the International Sportsperson route for the 2026 season.

Only the roles listed as part of this criteria are eligible for endorsement.

These requirements are applicable to the UK and are effective from 19 February 2026.

Consultation

The following requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation between the British Horse Society (via consultation with the Industry) and relevant Member Bodies of the British Equestrian Federation.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, the BHS confirm that full consultation has been carried out, this includes any organisation that fall within British Equestrian's remit that could be interpreted as an interested party, such as clubs, bodies, or player associations related to the sport.

Review

The requirements will be reviewed annually in December each year.

Length of season

Equestrian disciplines typically run throughout the year, there is no natural start or end to the season with the exception of Endurance Racing which runs from 1 March to 30 October annually.

Requirements

The table below shows the endorsement requirements for sponsors and migrants.

Category	Requirement
Sponsor	The sponsor's application must be accompanied by a letter from the Approved Governing Discipline Body of their Sport under the British Equestrian banner i.e., Endurance, Dressage, Show Jumping or Eventing confirming they/their company hold current membership to the highest level of affiliation.

Migrant	Rider	<p>Governing body endorsements will be issued to the individual if all of the following requirements are met:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Eventing, Show Jumping and Dressage riders must have competed Internationally for their country on more than 10 occasions within the last 2 years. b) Endurance Racing riders must have competed Internationally for their country on 2 or more occasions within the last 2 years. c) Proof of results must be supplied by the riders' National Governing Body.
	Coach	<p>Governing body endorsements will be issued to the individual if all of the following requirements are met:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A coach must hold an internationally recognised qualification equivalent to level 3 on the International Group for Equestrian Qualifications (IGEQ) Matrix in the specified discipline. b) They must provide references from previous employers and National Governing Body. c) Provide evidence of coaching experience at International level within the last 3 years or at National level for those wishing to extend their leave in the UK beyond 3 years. d) Coaches must also provide an up to date Police Check or equivalent of a Disclosure and Barring (DBS) check from the relevant country of origin.
	Chef d'Equipe	<p>Governing body endorsements will be issued to the individual if all of the following requirements are met:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) 5 years' experience working at FEI/International level. b) Current member of permanent staff, employed by Sponsor for at least six months. c) Official recognition by the FEI or National Federation.

<p>Assistant Trainer</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements will be issued to the individual if all of the following requirements are met:-</p> <p>a) 4 years' experience working at FEI/International level.</p> <p>b) As part of their aforementioned FEI/International experience, the Assistant Trainer must have gained considerable experience in:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing a stable and caring for horses. • Staff supervisory/recruitment skills. • Representing the trainer/coach in their absence. <p>c) Current member of permanent staff, employed by Sponsor for at least six months.</p>
<p>Head Lad/Lass</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements will be issued to the individual if all of the following requirements are met:-</p> <p>a) 4 years' experience working at FEI/International level.</p> <p>b) Current member of permanent staff, employed by Sponsor for at least six months.</p> <p>c) Only permanent staff employed by the sponsor with permanent stables in more than one country who move a significant population of their horses in line with seasonal competition seasons will be considered.</p>
<p>Work Rider</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements will be issued to the individual if all of the following requirements are met:-</p> <p>a) 3 years' experience working at FEI/International level.</p> <p>b) As part of their aforementioned FEI/International experience, the Work Rider must have experience of:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Riding and exercising horses on a daily basis. • Ensuring that they are ridden without injury or undue stress to ensure they are in top physical condition prior to racing/competing. <p>a) Current member of staff, employed by Sponsor for at least six months.</p>

	<p>Groom</p>	<p>Governing body endorsements will be issued to the individual if all of the following requirements are met:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Grooms must have at least 4 years' experience as a professional groom at FEI/International level. b) Be able to provide references from previous employers with the application within the last two years, detailing the FEI International show/s and dates they have attended. c) Grooms must have considerable experience of:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring for competition horses at home and at National/International competitions. • Preparing and entering horses for veterinary checks at competitions. • Travelling horses to competitions at home and abroad. • Treating minor wounds and administering medical care following veterinary instructions.
<p>Extensions In the case of request for an extension the coach, rider or support staff must continue to meet the required criteria as above.</p> <p>Change of Employment Where any coach, rider, groom or official intends to change employment, the new employer must request an endorsement to reapply for leave from UK Visa & Immigration officials.</p> <p>Confirmation of granted leave must be given before the individual can change employer.</p>		
<p>Groom, Head Lad/ Lass, and Work Rider Cap</p> <p>PLEASE NOTE: The number of GBEs the BHS is able to issue to migrant Grooms, Head Lads/ Lasses and Work Riders under this criteria is capped at the following:</p> <p>Show Jumping, Dressage, Eventing: two endorsements per role per discipline.</p> <p>Endurance racing: the highest number of GBEs previously issued to the above roles in a single criteria from the previous four years' criteria. For the avoidance of doubt, this caps the GBEs issued to the above three roles accumulatively and does not cap each role itself to previous amounts.</p> <p>This cap will be reviewed annually.</p>		

Injuries, Absences and Suspensions

Events for which a rider was unavailable for selection are to be excluded when calculating the rider's appearance percentage. Unavailable for selection means the rider was not available to participate due to injury or suspension and written evidence supporting this, setting out the events missed and the reason(s), must be provided by the rider's National Association or club doctor to British Horse Society for consideration.

Consideration will be given to the following when applying the criteria: injury; a period of maternity or paternity leave; serious illness or any legitimate medical reasons; suspension; international duty; 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 riding 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.

Further information

This information is available on the BHS website at www.bhs.org.uk

For any queries relating to the requirements or the endorsement process please contact:-

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The British Horse Society
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Stareton
Kenilworth
Warwickshire CV8 2XZ

Tel: 02476 840481
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Information on visas and immigration is available on the GOV.UK website.

Dispute handling procedures

All disputes will be dealt with under our Grievance and Appeals procedure.

Applications for appeal must be submitted within 28 days of the date of the written decision being issued. The appeal application must clearly outline the reasons for seeking the appeal against the decision.

The Dispute/Appeals panel will be three members of The British Horse Society.

British Horse Society Governing Body Endorsement Requirements



Please see the link to our Dispute, Complaint and Appeals Policy and Procedure for more information. <http://www.bhs.org.uk/professionals/work-permits-and-visas>

Section 3: Process for applying for an endorsement

How to apply for governing body endorsements for International Sportsperson applications

Endorsements will be issued by The British Horse Society.

Endorsement requests should be forwarded to The British Horse Society where the information will be verified, and the endorsement approved where appropriate.

Each approved endorsement will be provided with a unique number for use by the employer when applying to UK Visa & Immigration sponsor licensing processing officials for registration as a sponsor.

Sponsors are required to keep copies of all documents relating to endorsements received by The British Horse Society.