



Hiked immigration fees could increase costs for employers recruiting overseas talent

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The UK government raised most work and visit visas by 15 percent effective 4 October 2023.

"The latest increase in immigration fees can be seen as yet another upfront overhead for businesses recruiting overseas talent," said Vanessa Ganguin, an attorney with GQ|Littler in London.

"With the skills shortages many sectors we work with are facing, these price increases are unlikely to stop a predicted increase in work visas over the next few years," she said.

In addition to the recent fee increases, the IHS—the compulsory charge for immigrants to use the U.K.'s National Health Service—is rising about 66 percent, to 1,035 pounds from 624 pounds, in 2024. A discounted rate for students, children and youth mobility visa holders also will rise, Ganguin noted.

With the higher health surcharge, a family of two adults and two children will pay 18,110 pounds over a five-year visa, a big hike over the current 10,940 pounds, she said, adding that the charge already has tripled since it was introduced at 200 pounds in 2015.

"Home Office fees generally increase annually, but this year's overhaul is well above inflation," Ganguin said. "Britain's immigration fees are already far, far higher than comparable European countries and the United States."