



Northern Ireland Volleyball Governing Body Endorsement Guidance and Requirements

This guidance is to be used for all International Sportsperson Northern Ireland Volleyball governing body endorsement requests, in accordance with the Home Office Points Based Immigration System, made on or after 8 August 2025.

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](#).

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 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 **sports 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 relevant **approved sports governing body** for their sport before you assign the certificate of sponsorship.

1.4 An **approved sports 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.

1.5 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.

1.6 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.

1.7 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.

1.8 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.

1.9 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.

1.10 Compliance with the Code of Practice for Sports Governing Bodies

In reviewing this criteria, Northern Ireland Volleyball 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 section explains Northern Ireland Volleyball requirements for the International Sportsperson route.

The requirements are effective from 8 August 2025.

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

These requirements are applicable to Northern Ireland only.

2.1 Consultation

The following requirements have been agreed by the Home Office following consultation with Northern Ireland Volleyball.

Prior to contacting the Home Office during the annual review of this criteria, Northern Ireland Volleyball confirm that full consultation has been carried out, this includes any organisation that could be interpreted as an interested party, such as clubs, bodies, or player associations related to Volleyball in the UK.

2.2 Review

The requirements will be reviewed annually. The next review will be May 2026.

2.3 Length of season

The season for Volleyball runs from 1st October to 31st May annually. With European and International club competitions running throughout the year.

2.4 Requirements

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

Category	Requirement
Sponsor	Only Northern Ireland Volleyball and any club affiliated to Northern Ireland Volleyball are eligible for a sponsor endorsement.
Migrant Player	To be issued a governing body endorsement, a Player must meet one of the following requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Player must have played in at least eight competitive matches for an FIVB tier II, III, IV, V ranked National

	<p>Federation's International Senior team during the two years preceding the date of the application of endorsement; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Player must have been a participating member of a squad in the 1st or 2nd domestic league in an FIVB tier III, IV or V National Federation. Specifically, they must have been part of the 14-person roster in at least 8 competitive matches during the 2022, 2023 or 2024 season; or • A Player must have been a participating member of a squad in the NCAA D1, D2 or D3. Specifically, they must have been a part of the 14-person roster in at least 8 competitive matches during the 2022, 2023 or 2024 season; or • A Player must have been a participating member of a squad in the Canadian University League. Specifically, they must have been a part of the 14-person roster in at least 8 competitive matches during the 2022, 2023 or 2024 season; or • A player must have been a participating member of a squad in the highest domestic University League in an FIVB tier IV or V National Federation. Specifically, they must have been a part of the 14-person roster in at least 8 competitive matches during the 2022, 2023 or 2024 season. <p>For the avoidance of doubt: Competitive games comprise games played in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Games • World Championships • Games within any qualifying tournament for the above • World Ranking Points matches <p>The FIVB National Federation rankings can be found here:</p>  <p>FIVB National Federations</p>
Migrant Coach	<p>To be issued a governing body endorsement, a Coach is required to have proven experience of coaching as a Head or Assistant Coach for one full season. This means having been head coach of a team that meets one of the below requirements within the last 5 years:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FIVB tier II, III, IV or V National Federation national team. • A club team in the highest domestic league in an FIVB tier III, IV, or V national federation. <p>A coach is also required to have gained a FIVB Coaches Course Level 2 qualification or an equivalent satisfactory qualification, which also includes awareness of Health & Safety, a First Aid qualification, an awareness of child welfare issues and a relevant police check from their country of origin. Attendance at a Safeguarding and Protecting Children course is required to practice once in the UK.</p> <p>Relevant FIVB Online Courses and Technical Material can be found here www.fivb.com</p> <p>Evidence to show a recruitment search has been undertaken should be provided. This should include a copy of an advertisement and the names of all applicants (an advert must be live for a minimum of two weeks on the Northern Ireland website) see the full policy guidance on sponsoring a worker for more information.</p>
Migrant Player/Coach	<p>A Player/Coach must meet the playing criteria (as above) and is required to have gained a qualification listed above or an equivalent qualification which also includes Health & Safety, First Aid qualifications, an awareness of child welfare issues and a relevant police check from their country of origin. Attendance at a Safeguarding and Protecting Children course is required to practice once in the UK.</p>
<p>Injuries, Absences and Suspensions</p> <p>Matches for which the applicant was unavailable for selection are to be excluded when calculating the applicant appearance percentage. Unavailable for selection means the applicant was not available to participate due to injury or suspension and written evidence supporting this, setting out the games missed and the reason(s), must be provided by the applicant to Northern Ireland Volleyball for consideration.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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</p>	

guilty of a corruption offence and/ or a doping offence and/ or another misconduct offence.

2.5 Further information

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

Jonathan McFadden
President
Northern Ireland Volleyball

Email: jmcfadden@nivolleyball.com

Information on visas and immigration is available on the GOV.UK website.

Dispute Handling Procedures

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 a review. In these cases, Northern Ireland Volleyball 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 review panel available, and the decision of the Review Panel is final (subject to final appeal). Sponsors should therefore ensure 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 migrant during the season unless their status changes and they meet the requirements whereby a new application can be submitted.

If the initial review is refused, the migrant may request a final appeal as set out at point **d**.

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 Northern Ireland Volleyball.

A review shall be commenced by the sponsor submitting a notice of appeal within 28 days of the initial decision to the Northern Ireland Volleyball and Governance Director. 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 the 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 **£100**. The panel shall have discretion as to whether the deposit is returned.

The procedure for appeal will be in accordance with the Disciplinary Regulations and the Review Panel shall be comprised as detailed below.

b. The Review Panel

The Review Panel will be appointed by the Disciplinary Hearings Manager. The appointed Review Panel shall consist of: an independent chairman, one representative of the migrant (who has not been involved in the initial decision) and one representative of named further representatives.

c. Refusal at Review

An endorsement request at review may be refused if the migrant does not meet the relevant criteria set out in this document or fails to provide the mandatory documents.

Northern Ireland Volleyball will notify the sponsor and the migrant in writing of any endorsement request which is refused at review stage, setting out the reasons for refusal.

d. Final Appeal

The migrant shall have 7 days from the date of the written refusal at review stage to submit a final appeal in writing to Northern Ireland Volleyball.

PLEASE NOTE: The migrant may only submit a Final Appeal on the basis that Northern Ireland Volleyball have not applied the endorsement criteria correctly.

Northern Ireland Volleyball shall consider the final appeal, and any evidence submitted in support and shall, within 7 working days of the receipt of the final appeal, notify the migrant of its decision.

e. The Decision

Northern Ireland Volleyball will make a decision using the above criteria which shall be final and binding. There are no other grounds of appeal.

Section 3: Process for applying for an endorsement

3.1 How to apply for governing body endorsements for International Sportsperson sponsor applications

All potential sponsors should note that the purpose of an endorsement for a prospective sponsor is to confirm to the Home Office officials processing sponsor applications that the application is from a Northern Ireland Volleyball affiliated club that has a legitimate requirement to bring migrants to the UK as sportspeople. The Home Office has additional criteria for sponsors that must be met in order for an organisation to be granted a sponsor license. It is not Northern Ireland Volleyball who finally grant a sponsor license.

3.2 How to apply for governing body endorsements for International Sportsperson migrant applications

Once an organisation has obtained its sponsor licence from the Home Office, the sponsor will be able to apply for Certificates of Sponsorship, which it will allocate to migrants coming here to work for it. Each migrant that an organisation wishes to employ needs to be assigned a Certificate of Sponsorship. However, before an organisation can assign a Certificate of Sponsorship to a sportsperson, they will also have to obtain an endorsement from Northern Ireland Volleyball for all applications made for individual sportspeople and coaches.

3.3 Administration Fee

An administration fee of £550 is payable for each governing body endorsement for migrant applications. An invoice will be sent to the sponsor by Northern Ireland Volleyball and must be paid in line with payment terms.