

Rising Skills Gap in Immigration Advice and Compliance Increases Need for Ongoing Training

Is your immigration compliance knowledge up to date? Discover the latest UK immigration changes and why ongoing training is your best defence against fines.



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/EINPresswire.com/ -- UK immigration law is changing faster than most HR teams and legal advisers can keep pace with, and the gap between what organisations know and what the law now requires is growing. For businesses that sponsor overseas workers, and for the advisers who support them, that gap carries serious financial and legal consequences.

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With penalties up to £60,000 per worker, relying on outdated immigration knowledge is a significant financial risk. Training programs don't just improve knowledge, they safeguard your organisation.”

David Jones, Director of HJT Training

Civil penalties for employing someone without the right to work currently reach up to £60,000 per worker for repeat breaches, following an increase introduced by the Home Office in February 2024. In the first quarter of 2025 alone, the Home Office issued 748 penalty notices with a combined value of £41.6 million. Enforcement visits reached a record 12,791 in 2025, up 48% year on year. These are not edge cases. They reflect a compliance environment that has fundamentally shifted.

The pressure has intensified further following the government's immigration white paper, published in May

2025, which set out plans to raise skilled worker eligibility thresholds, tighten English language requirements across more visa routes, and extend the qualifying period for settlement from five to ten years. These are not minor adjustments. They change the criteria on which employers and advisers have been operating for years, and any training completed before they came into effect is now incomplete.

For HR teams, the most immediate challenges involve right-to-work checks, sponsor licence

management, and Certificate of Sponsorship processes. The People Management guide to immigration in 2026 describes a landscape where sponsorship costs have increased, compliance expectations have tightened, and immigration decisions are now being scrutinised by finance directors and senior leadership. Staff who understood the rules in 2023 are working from an outdated picture, and the consequences of that are no longer theoretical.

The sponsor licence audit process puts this into sharp relief. When the Home Office visits, it examines record keeping, right-to-work check portfolios, reporting compliance, and how the organisation has responded to changes in immigration rules. A structured training programme does not simply improve knowledge; it serves as documented evidence of proactive risk management. Without it, organisations cannot demonstrate that they have taken reasonable steps to stay compliant.

For those working as immigration advisers, the regulatory requirements are even more specific. Providing immigration advice without registration is a criminal offence under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. The [Immigration Advice Authority \(IAA\)](#), formerly the OISC, regulates advisers at three levels of competence, each with its own syllabus, assessment requirements, and scope of permitted practice. Registration is not a one-time process. As rules change, advisers must demonstrate continued competence, and many who registered under earlier rule sets now need to update their knowledge to work accurately at their authorised level.

The IAA's own data shows an average pass rate of 55% across Levels 1 to 3 in 2024/25, which reflects the genuine difficulty of meeting competence standards without thorough preparation. Preparation matters, and access to well-structured, up-to-date training is the deciding factor for most candidates.

[HJT Training](#) offers modular courses spanning IAA Levels 1, 2, and 3, delivered as live online sessions and in-person training across London, Birmingham, and Manchester. HJT also provides specialist courses on managing Home Office audits and presenting immigration appeals, alongside a comprehensive subscription resource called [Mastering Immigration Law](#), which gives advisers and legal professionals current, searchable guidance on UK immigration law as it stands today. In-house training options are also available for organisations that want to bring compliance knowledge directly to their teams.

The organisations and advisers who fare best in this environment are those that treat training as a continuous process rather than a one-off exercise. The rules have changed, the enforcement has intensified, and the cost of not knowing the law is now measurable in five and six-figure sums.

About HJT Training

HJT Training has been delivering specialist immigration law and human rights training to legal professionals, businesses, NGOs, and government bodies since 2003. Founded by barristers David Jones and Mark Symes, HJT offers live online and in-person courses, IAA accreditation

training, Home Office audit preparation, and the Mastering Immigration Law subscription resource. Courses are available across IAA Levels 1, 2, and 3, with in-house training options for organisations.

Androulla Demetriou

HJT Training

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