

ISSUE 3: 2026



THE PAN-AFRICAN WORKER



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IWW Clydeside
GMB

PAWA IWW
(Pan African Worker's Association)

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WORKSHOP

Thank You Glasgow



Bound to the Boss: Migrant workers, visa regime and the fight for solidarity

The crisis of imperialism continues unabated, with aggression overseas and repression at home. Andy Burnham's promises will soon run flat as British capitalism limps on, with the crisis of profitability intensifying by the day.

The ruling class presents the current crisis as a result of immigration, yet the exploitation of migrant labour, both on land and in British waters, is arguably one of the few areas where profitability continues to be found.

This third issue explores the slave-like conditions under which sponsored workers are forced to work. The visa sponsorship system is little more than slavery in sheep's clothing.

Sponsored workers cannot freely dispose of their labour, and the system is reinforced by human resources departments that enforce right-to-work regulations with great vigour. The article inside on the need to check before switching sponsors is particularly illuminating, demonstrating just how limited the rights and choices of sponsored workers can be.

We also explore the question: who

cares for the carers, Care work remains poorly remunerated, while migrant workers are increasingly relied upon to prevent the system from collapsing.

Yet fundamental issues such as fair rotas, realistic workloads, decent pay, and adequate mental health support remain unresolved.

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Migrant workers cannot be treated as a separate problem to be managed.

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Our flagship programme, the Activist Development Programme (ADP), continues at pace. The fifth cohort of students started last month, while those who have already completed the programme are making a positive contribution to our movement.

Our organising work in Ireland has also begun. The Ireland chapter of PAWA is developing rapidly, with several people already signed up for the ADP. This is an important step in extending

our organising work and building solidarity across borders.

Our work, however, remains constrained by the visa regime. Many migrant workers fear that speaking up could affect their hours, employment, or immigration status. The solution is not another charity, nor another dedicated migrant workers' section within the trade union movement. What is needed is solidarity across the working class.

The trade union movement has the power to demand fundamental change. However, it goes without saying that elements of chauvinism remain within the movement, particularly in attitudes towards migrant workers. This must change. Migrant workers cannot be treated as a separate problem to be managed; their struggle is part of the wider struggle of the working class.

The task before us is to organise across immigration status, nationality, and workplace — to confront exploitation wherever it exists and build a movement capable of challenging both the visa regime and the system that depends upon it.

In solidarity,

Guruuswa



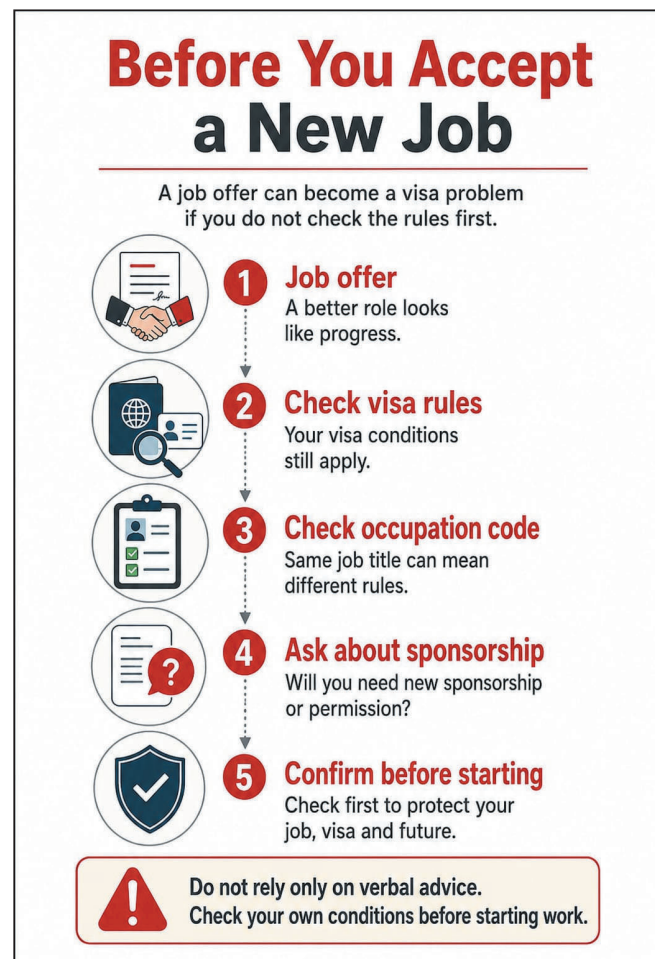
Check before you switch

● *By Abdul Malik*

A migrant support worker sees an attractive vacancy. The salary is better, the hours are stable, and the employer is ready to offer the job. It feels like progress. But behind that opportunity is a question many sponsored workers do not ask until it is too late: does the new job fit the conditions of the visa?

For workers on the Skilled Worker route, a job title alone is not enough. Two roles may be called “support worker”, yet they can fall under different occupation codes. That difference can affect whether the role is eligible for sponsorship, whether a worker can change employers, or whether extra employment is permitted.

This became more important after immigration rule changes introduced new skill requirements and transitional protections for some workers already in the Skilled Worker route. A person who entered the route before the chang-



es may have options that a newer applicant does not. This means advice such as “my friend did it, so you can too” can be dangerously misleading.

Another common misunderstanding concerns second jobs. Some workers believe they can simply take an additional job for up to 20 hours a week. In reality, addi-

tional employment must still meet immigration conditions. Working outside those conditions can place a worker’s immigration status at risk.

The lesson is simple: before accepting a new role, changing employers or starting extra work, migrant workers should check the occupation code, sponsorship re-

quirements and the conditions attached to their visa. They should also keep copies of their Certificate of Sponsorship, visa decisions, contracts and correspondence.

Employers and recruiters may understand recruitment, but they may not always understand the immigration consequences for each worker. Sponsored workers therefore need to ask questions before starting work, not after a problem appears.

This is why immigration knowledge is also a workers’ rights issue. A better salary or opportunity means little if accepting it unknowingly breaches visa conditions.

For migrant workers, one of the most important questions is no longer only, “What will I earn?”

It is: “What occupation code is this job under, and am I legally allowed to do it?”

That question could protect a worker’s job, visa and future.



Who Cares for the Carers?

The hidden cost of long hours, exhaustion and life behind the uniform

●By PAWA writer

Although the profession rarely makes headlines, it quietly sustains millions of lives every day and often supports people to experience a dignified end of life.

Who Cares for the Carers?
The hidden cost of long hours, exhaustion and life behind the uniform



At 6am, a care worker leaves home while the family is still asleep. By the time the worker returns, the children may already be in bed. Tomorrow may be the same: another long shift, another cover request, another weekend sacrificed because the rota is short.

This is the hidden side of care work.

Behind the uniform is a husband, wife, parent or partner trying to hold together two demanding lives. Many workers accept overtime because rent, bills and immigration costs do not wait. Others feel unable to refuse because colleagues are short-staffed or they fear losing hours. Slowly, work enters the home.

A partner complains, “We never see you.” Children stop expecting a parent at school events. Days off become recovery days rather than family days. Conversations turn into arguments about money, tired-

Behind every shift is a life, a family and a worker who also needs care.

ness and absence. Relationships that once survived migration, distance and hardship can begin to break under another pressure: never having enough time or energy for each other.

Then there is the emotional burden. Care workers support people through illness, disability, distress and death. They may absorb grief at work, smile for the next service user, then drive home exhausted and expected to become themselves again.

For some, the pressure becomes dangerous. An Office for National Statistics analysis of deaths registered in England between 2011 and 2015 found that male and female carers had a suicide risk almost twice the national average. The statistics do not prove care work caused those deaths, but they warn that worker wellbeing cannot be treated as an afterthought.

England’s adult social care workforce also experiences high turnover. Skills for Care estimated a 23.1 percent turnover rate in 2024/25, representing about 335,000 people leaving their roles.

Care workers spend their lives protecting the dignity and wellbeing of others. Who protects theirs?

Fair rotas, proper rest, realistic workloads, decent pay, confidential mental-health support and the freedom to say, “I am exhausted,” without punishment are not luxuries. They are safeguards.

A care system cannot be healthy when the people holding it together are exhausted, isolated or losing their families.

Caring for carers must become part of caring itself.



Building solidarity through coordination, collective action

●By Nandi

Recently, activists, organisers, caseworkers, educators, and trade unionists came together for the IWW Solidarity and Coordination event, a day dedicated to strengthening connections between those working on issues of migration and labour.

The event was organised with a clear purpose: to create a space where people from different backgrounds and organisations could collectively reflect on the challenges facing migrant and working-class communities and begin exploring practical ways to work together more effectively.

Participants travelled from across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and other European countries, bringing a wide range of experiences and perspectives to the discussions. Following an opening presentation and discussion, participants divided into three workshop streams focusing on education, organising, and casework. Rather than running workshops as isolated sessions, the structure of the day encouraged participants to spend significant time discussing shared concerns, identifying common goals, and developing ideas for future collaboration.



IWW flags flying proudly at a workers' gathering in Ireland, a powerful symbol of solidarity, collective action, and unity across borders.

Throughout the workshops, attendees exchanged experiences from their own organising and support work, highlighting both the challenges faced by workers and migrants and the opportunities that emerge when groups coordinate their efforts.

Discussions covered a wide range of issues, including workplace organising, access to information and education, support for vulnerable workers, and strategies for building stronger networks of solidarity.

One of the most valuable aspects of the day was the opportunity to bring together people who do not often have the chance to meet and plan collectively. The workshops created space not only for discussion but also

for the development of practical ideas, potential projects, and ongoing relationships that participants hope to build upon in the months ahead. The event concluded with a shared meal, allowing conversations to continue in a more informal setting and further strengthening the sense of community that had developed throughout the day.

The success of the gathering demonstrated the importance of creating spaces where organisers, educators, and caseworkers can learn from one another and develop collective responses to the challenges facing workers and migrants today. We look forward to continuing these conversations and turning the ideas generated during the event into concrete action that.

WORKERS' VOICES



My sponsor promised to renew my visa — then told me they couldn't

“I am reaching out because I urgently need guidance about my immigration status and employment.

My Skilled Worker visa was due to expire on 2 July 2026. For months, I believed my employer would renew my sponsorship. They requested my documents and gave me every reason to think the process would go ahead. Then, close to the expiry of my visa, I was told they could no longer provide me with a Certificate of Sponsorship.

Suddenly, I was facing the possibility of losing not only my job, but also the immigration status on which I had built my life in the UK. I was also quoted nearly £6,000

in legal costs, an amount I simply could not afford. I therefore began looking into making a Fee Waiver request and an FLR(FP) application myself while searching for another employer who may be able to sponsor me in future.

What frightens me most is how quickly a sponsored worker can move from feeling secure to facing uncertainty. I trusted that my employer would deal with the renewal as promised.

Now I am trying to understand complicated immigration rules while worrying about work, money and my future. I am asking the union for guidance so that I can protect my rights and make informed decisions. In solidarity, – *YA, Derby.*

Unity Is Our Strength

“Dear fellow migrant workers, we already face many challenges . . . immigration pressures, long hours, financial stress and adapting to new environments. We should not make life harder for one another through gossip, backbiting, jealousy or unnecessary competition.

Another migrant worker is not your enemy. If there is a problem, speak directly and respectfully. Support colleagues when they struggle and avoid spreading stories that divide the workplace.

Unity does not mean agreeing on everything; it means respecting each other despite differences. When workers stand together, share information and defend one another, we become stronger.

Reject division. Choose respect, solidarity and unity. An injury to one is an injury to all. – *HK, Swinton.*



pawa@iww.org.uk

ADP TRAINING



● *By Pawa Writer*

The 4th cohort of the Activist Development Programme (ADP) was more than a training programme, it was a space where workers came together to learn, share experiences and discover the power of collective action.

Throughout the programme, participants explored workers' rights, workplace challenges and the importance of organising. Discussions were practical and rooted in real situations that workers face every day, from unfair treatment and poor communication to fear of speaking up.

One of the most powerful parts of the programme



ADP participants building confidence, worker power and solidarity.

was the use of interactive role-play. Participants practised how to approach colleagues, start meaningful conversations and explain the benefits of joining a union. These exercises helped turn knowledge into confidence and showed that organising does not begin with a big campaign—it often begins with one conversation between workers.

The purpose of ADP is simple but powerful: to equip workers with the knowledge, confidence and practical skills to stand up for themselves and support others. Participants learn how to identify workplace issues, communicate effectively, build solidarity and take collective action rather than facing problems alone.

By the end of the programme, the difference was clear. People who had arrived unsure of their voice were leaving ready to use it. The energy in the room showed what becomes possible when workers learn together and realise they are stronger when united.

If you want to understand your rights, build your confidence and become someone who can help create positive change at work, ADP is for you.

The next cohort could be where your organising journey begins. What are you waiting for? Join ADP and help build stronger workplaces through worker power and solidarity.



Health, movement and protecting the body from everyday pressure

● *By Adam Awud*

Stress does not always arrive dramatically. Sometimes it begins with a tight work schedule, unrealistic targets, family pressures or a workplace that never seems to slow down. Over time, the body and mind begin to carry the weight.

Adam Awud's message is simple: stress should not be ignored until it becomes a crisis. When pressure becomes constant, the body remains in a state of alert. Heart rate and blood pressure can rise, sleep can suffer, concentration can

fall, and unhealthy coping habits may become easier to adopt. The result can affect both mental wellbeing and cardiovascular health.

For workers, this matters. Long shifts, staff shortages, financial worries and difficult working environments can leave little space for recovery. Yet wellbeing cannot be postponed until the next quiet week.

One accessible way to manage stress is movement. Running, walking, cycling, swimming, skipping, dancing, yoga and strength training can help the body release tension and improve mood, focus

and sleep. Exercise does not need to mean spending hours in a gym. A regular 10- to 30-minute session can be a realistic starting point, especially for someone returning to exercise after a long break.

Adam also reminds us that exercise can be social. Training with a partner, colleague, family member or community group can create motivation, friendship and healthy competition. For people experiencing loneliness, being active with others can provide connection and physical benefit.

The important thing is to start at a level that matches your age, health, ability and goals. Wellness is not about punishing the body. It is about helping it recover, strengthen and cope better with everyday pressure.

Workers spend much of their lives meeting targets, supporting families and caring for others. Our own health deserves the same commitment. The challenge is simple: move a little more, rest better, connect with others and make wellbeing part of everyday life — not something we remember only when stress has already taken control.





Filtered out before the interview

When immigration status becomes a barrier to work

● *By Jessie Ola-Morris*

I found what felt like the perfect job: a communications role that matched my experience in journalism and advocacy, as well as my academic background in migration. It was the kind of opportunity I had been preparing for.

I completed the application feeling hopeful. Then came the visa question. I selected “Stamp 2.” Within seconds, the application ended.

“Application closed. Sorry, you cannot proceed to the next stage.”

No interview. No conversation. No opportunity to explain my experience or demonstrate what I could bring. My CV remained open in another browser tab, unread. A computer system had decided I was unsuitable before a human being had even considered me.

For many international students and migrant workers, particularly Africans living abroad, this experience is painfully familiar. We invest heavily in education, leave families behind and build new lives with the hope of gaining meaningful experience and contributing our skills. Yet sometimes one box on an application form be-



comes more important than qualifications, experience or potential.

In Ireland, international students on Stamp 2 have restricted working hours, while many graduates later move to Stamp 1G, which provides broader access to employment while they seek longer-term opportunities. But employers do not always understand these different permissions. Some immediately associate migrant workers with complicated sponsorship requirements, while automated recruitment systems may simply filter applicants out.

The result can be severe underemployment. Graduates with qualifications and years of experience may find themselves working far outside their professional fields, not because they lack ability, but because opportunities are closed before their capabilities are considered.

Repeated rejection also carries a human cost. Confidence can suffer. People begin questioning their value and whether the future they worked towards is achievable.

But society loses too. Employers miss skilled workers, fresh perspectives and valuable lived experience.

This is why fair recruitment is a workers’ rights issue. Employers should review automated screening systems and ensure visa questions identify genuine legal requirements rather than becoming unnecessary barriers.

Migrant students are not asking for special treatment. They are asking for something much simpler:

A fair opportunity to be seen, heard and judged on what they can actually contribute.



Migration, organising and building worker power across Ireland

Every Worker Needs a Union

● *By Julia*

Between April and June 2026, three public events organised by the Pan-African Workers Association (PAWA) and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), alongside members of the African Centre Ireland and other trade union activists, took place in Derry, Belfast and Dublin.

The events created an important space for migrant workers, trade unionists and activists to discuss migration, workplace organising, employment rights and visa rights. These conversations reflected many of the concerns already raised throughout *The Pan-African Worker*, particularly the insecurity, isolation and workplace pressures experienced by migrant workers.

PAWA members shared personal experiences and spoke about the importance of organising not only within trade unions, but also within communities. The message was clear: workers are stronger when they communicate, support one another and act collectively.

The events also highlighted the role of *The Pan-African Worker* newsletter as an organising tool. By sharing workers' experiences, ex-



PAWA and IWW activists, migrant workers and trade unionists in discussion at the Migration and Workplace Organising event in Derry,

plaining rights and exposing workplace problems, the publication can help reach workers who may otherwise feel isolated and build greater working-class awareness.

A recurring theme was fear. Many migrant workers worry that speaking up could affect their hours, employment or immigration position. Employers can benefit when workers feel isolated or afraid to challenge unfair treatment. Union organising helps break that isolation by giving workers collective support, representation and confidence.

The discussions were lively and participatory. Workers raised questions, shared workplace concerns and proposed ideas for future organising and follow-up events.

What emerged from Derry, Belfast and Dublin was more than discussion. It was a reminder that migrant workers need spaces where their specific experiences can be heard and understood.

The lesson was simple:

No worker should face workplace problems alone.

Wherever we work, wherever we live and whatever our immigration status, workers need organisation, solidarity and a collective voice.

Every worker needs a union — because when workers organise together, fear becomes confidence and isolation becomes power.

PAWA GALLERY



UPCOMING EVENTS



6 September 2026: Know Your Rights Campaign
(Glasgow)

27 September 2026: Monthly Members Online meeting

24 October 2026: ADP Training

25 October 2026: Monthly Members Online meeting

GET INVOLVED



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**Follow the news and updates from The
Pan African Worker
on social media.**

**Join the journey as we build a vibrant
and stronger working class.**

**Use any of our online platforms
– we'd love to have you with us.**

TELEGRAM QR CODE



@PAWA_UK





THE PAN-AFRICAN WORKER

About

PAWA is a workers association for mostly but not exclusively African workers aimed at improving working conditions and work possibilities in the UK. We are a chartered association of the IWW, a registered trade union in Britain.

General Enquiries

General Secretary
pawa@iww.org.uk

Industrial Workers of the
World (IWW), Wales, Ireland,
Scotland & England Regional
Administration (WISE-RA),
PO Box 111, Minehead, TA24
9DH, United Kingdom. IWW.
ORG.UK