

Professor Brian Bell  
Migration Advisory Committee  
2nd Floor Peel Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London, SW1P 4DF

17 March 2020

Dear Brian

## **COMMISSION TO REVIEW THE COMPOSITION OF THE SHORTAGE OCCUPATION LISTS**

I am very grateful to the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) for its thoughtful and comprehensive report on salary thresholds and the points-based immigration system. You will have seen we have since published a detailed statement on the UK's future immigration system, which responds to the MAC's report, including taking on board most of its recommendations.

Last May, the MAC published its full report on Shortage Occupation Lists (SOLs) at Appendix K of the Immigration Rules, determining which occupations it would be sensible to fill through non-EEA migration under Tier 2 (General) of the current immigration system. The Government subsequently accepted all the MAC's recommendations in full on the composition of the SOLs. However, as that review was focusing on current arrangements, that report only covered occupations at RQF6 and above.

In its most recent report, the MAC has questioned the continuing value of SOLs, noting that the value is diminished if both the cap on the number of migrants and the Resident Labour Market Test (RLMT) are abolished. The policy statement confirms it is our intention to make both changes.

However, we have also set out our aim, as an initial step from January 2021, to add tradeable points into the employer-led skilled worker migration route. This will be ahead of creating the unsponsored points-based system, to sit alongside the employer-led route, which the MAC covered in its report.

Whether an occupation is in shortage will be one of the key factors for which a migrant will be able to score tradeable points and therefore the SOLs must continue to be an important part of the future immigration system.


In line with the MAC's advice, the skilled worker route in the future immigration system will encompass all occupations at RQF3 and above. The purpose of this letter is to commission the MAC to compile a UK shortage occupation list, which will cover all occupations in the RQF3-5 bracket. The MAC may also want to consider whether any amendments are needed to the existing SOLs for occupations at RQF6 and above to reflect any changes in circumstances since last May. In determining

whether an occupation should stay on the SOLs, I would want the MAC to consider whether employers have taken other necessary measures to address shortages.

The future immigration system will work in the interests of the whole of the UK. Therefore, you should, as before, consider whether there are occupations that need to be included on the separate Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish SOLs, as well as the main UK-wide SOL

At the same time, I would welcome the MAC's advice on how the SOLs can be kept under regular review and updated, as proactively as possible, to reflect the changing needs of the UK labour market.

I should be grateful if the Committee could report on this new commission by the end of September 2020.

*Wk all good wishes*  


**RT HON PRITI PATEL MP  
HOME SECRETARY**