



MIGRATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Migration Advisory Committee**

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16 May 2022

Geraint Davies MP  
Chair Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee  
Committee Office  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

Dear Geraint,

Congratulations on your appointment as interim Chair of the EFRA select committee.

Thank you for your committee's letter of 5 April 2022 which accompanied the release of your report 'Labour shortages in the food and farming sector'. We have read the report with interest and, as you will be aware, two members of Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), Professor Jo Swaffield and Madeleine Sumption OBE appeared before the EFRA Committee during your enquiry in a personal capacity.

Your letter noted that the MAC's Framework Document permits the MAC to engage in work of its choosing and to comment on the operation of any aspect of the immigration system. You have suggested that we use that ability to conduct an inquiry into the labour needs of the food and farming sector.


You may be aware that we are expecting that the Home Office will shortly commission the MAC to undertake a full update of the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) and that review will cover the occupations (all those skilled at RQF3 and above) within the food and farming sectors that are able to use the migration system. If that review is commissioned within a timely fashion, then we expect that will offer the best opportunity to secure cross Government support to address the labour market needs of the food and farming sector, along with a wide range of other sectors within the economy.

We would generally expect, as with our recent report on the impact of ending freedom of movement on adult social care, that inquiries into particular sectors would be commissioned via the Home Secretary, with the support of the relevant Secretaries of State for those departments that cover the affected sectors. This route feels to us to offer the best chance of wide-ranging Government support for any recommendations we might make, rather than Government receiving these unsolicited.

If a commission for the SOL review is not given to us in the next month or two, the Committee will have to consider alternative workplans.

On behalf of the Migration Advisory Committee

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line under the first name.

Professor Brian Bell  
Chair, Migration Advisory Committee

cc:

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Home Secretary  
Rt Hon George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Rt Hon Kevin Foster MP, Minister for Safe and Legal Migration  
Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary  
Tricia Hayes, Second Permanent Secretary  
Emma Churchill, Director General, Migration and Borders Group  
Philippa Rouse, Director, Future Borders Immigration System  
Sonia Dower, Director, System Leadership and Strategy  
Della McVay, Deputy Director, Economic Migration Policy