



Professor Brian Bell  
Chair  
Migration Advisory Committee  
Peel Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

6 September 2022

Dear Brian,

Thank you for your letter of 25 August and for setting out the issues relating to SOC 2020 data.

Given the SOC 2010 system is now several years out-of-date and the labour market has changed significantly since the data were last updated at the height of the pandemic, my preference would be to base the review on SOC 2020, if at all possible.

However, I am mindful it has already been two years since the last review of the Shortage Occupation List (SOL) and we have agreed the SOL should be reviewed more regularly in future. The question of which SOC code system we use for this review should not stand in the way of carrying it out in a timely fashion, particularly as regular reviews should mean we conduct a further SOL review (using SOC 2020) in the not-too-distant future.

On this basis, I agree it is sensible to defer the decision until the Office for National Statistics provides its further September update on the scale of the issue and how long it will take to fix. If, at this stage, it will clearly not be possible to complete the SOL review close to the timescale we envisaged, the MAC should proceed and base the review on SOC 2010. Given the lack of recent SOC 2010 data, I would expect sectors to provide the MAC with particularly strong evidence to make up for this deficiency, before roles could be added to the SOL.

Given the various issues you describe, I am content to extend the timescale for the review as you requested. I would welcome delivery of your final report as early in Spring 2023 as possible, with an absolute latest deadline of June 2023. If your report were to be delayed any further than then, we would not be able to implement its recommendations in the Autumn 2023 Immigration Rules changes, meaning they would be delayed until Spring 2024.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Foster MP  
Minister for Safe and Legal Migration