MAC Call for Evidence on the Shortage Occupation List – Representative organisations

Introduction

What is the Shortage Occupation List?

In August 2022, the Government commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to review the UK Shortage Occupation List (SOL). This was subsequently put on hold by the Government, and we were asked to start the commission in February 2023.

The SOL comprises occupations in shortage (i.e. where employers find it problematic to secure adequate numbers of workers with the required skills to fill their vacancies) **and** where migration is considered to be a sensible response to that shortage.

The occupations on the list are given some dispensations within the immigration rules, designed to make it easier for employers to access migrant labour to fill vacancies in those areas of identified shortage. Having a job on the SOL confers the following benefits:

- A lower salary threshold of either £20,480 or 80% of the going rate for that occupation (whichever is higher). For example, if the going rate for an electrical engineer is £37,000, the salary would be reduced to £29,600 if it was on the SOL. The Government is planning to uprate salary thresholds across the Skilled Worker routes as part of the routine Spring package of immigration rules changes expected to lay on 9th March. Subject to Parliamentary approval, this will see the Skilled Worker general threshold increase to £26,200, and the lower SOL salary threshold to £20,960. You can find the latest values in the immigration rules appendix. The MAC have decided to recommend to Government that this salary threshold discounting will no longer apply to occupations which are on a national pay scale or subject to a binding going-rate threshold above the general threshold. We will be conducting this SOL review on the basis of this recommendation, so many occupations previously eligible for consideration will be excluded.
- Reduced visa fees: Standard visa fees for a Skilled Worker visa application range from £625 (less than 3 years) to £1,423 (over 3 years), for occupations on the SOL the costs are £479 and £943 respectively. A reduction of just under 25% and just over 35% respectively for visas.

- The salary discount that applies to applications for SOL occupations also applies at the time of making an application for settlement (or Indefinite Leave to Remain).
- Although supplementary work is not allowed in most circumstances whilst on a Skilled Worker visa, a Skilled Worker visa holder can engage in supplementary work where that work is in an occupation on the SOL.
- Asylum seekers whose claim has been outstanding for more than 12 months may apply for permission to work. Those who are allowed to work are restricted to occupations which are on the SOL.

About our Commission

We have been asked to consider:

1. Whether the salary requirement for occupations on the SOL should, in future, be whichever is higher of the going rate (rather than 20% less than the going rate) or £20,480, subject to an absolute minimum of £10.10 per hour;
2. Which occupations on the current SOL should continue to be included and which should be removed;
3. Which occupations, if any, based on evidence provided by stakeholders, should be added to the SOL, at:
   a. RQF6 or above;
   b. RQF3-5;
   c. RQF1-2 in exceptional circumstances

The MAC have already decided that we will recommend that the SOL salary threshold discount for those occupations subject to a binding going rate be abolished, and will conduct this SOL review on that basis. This will mean that occupations on national pay scales and occupations where the going rate is above the Skilled Worker general salary threshold are excluded (as these occupations cannot benefit from a salary discount). Salary thresholds are likely, subject to Parliamentary approval, to be uprated as part of the routine Spring package of immigration rules changes expected to lay on 9th March. In practice, this means that the only occupations that will benefit from being on the SOL are those for which the occupation's going rate falls between £20,960 to £26,200.

This is a major review of the SOL and no occupation currently on the SOL will be guaranteed to remain on the list. We will only be considering occupations for inclusion on the SOL where stakeholders provide evidence through this Call for Evidence.

We have been asked to consider occupations skilled at RQF3 and above which are currently eligible for Skilled Worker visas and therefore the SOL. We have also been asked by the

Government to consider the evidence for occupations at RQF1-2- these jobs are currently not eligible for a Skilled Worker visa.

Stakeholders will be asked to demonstrate that an occupation (or a specific job within the occupation) requires substantial training/qualifications and prior experience and that the job/occupation should be recategorized to RQF3 to be made eligible for Skilled Work visas. Alternatively, it may be that the occupation is facing severe and unexpected shortage and that despite the efforts of employers/sectors it is proving impossible to recruit resident workers. We will then consider this evidence as a request for temporary inclusion for eligibility of Skilled Worker visas. Only in exceptional circumstances, with compelling evidence such as the MAC received for the Social Care commission, will occupations at RQF1-2 level be considered for inclusion on the SOL.

Given the recent nature of our recommendation to include care workers on the SOL and the continued failure of the Government to respond to that report, we will not be asking the social care sector to resubmit evidence to this review for their continued inclusion on the SOL. This also applies to senior care workers, which will also continue to be included.

As the SOL is part of a strategy to address shortage for a particular job in the UK market, no jobs will remain on the SOL indefinitely. You should save your submission to this questionnaire for your own records so that you can add to your submission for future SOL reviews.

How can I respond?

This questionnaire will remain open until **26th May 2023.** We really value your input and would find it helpful if you could respond as soon as possible so that we can start considering your views and information.

We have updated our guidance which accompanies our CfE, this is available on our webpage and we strongly recommend that you read this before completing this CfE. It may be helpful to share a version of this questionnaire on our webpage with your organisation, to collate your response before completing the online questionnaire.

All identifying and personal information will remain confidential, however aggregated and anonymised information in the form of summary statistics will be published as part of our final report. We will ask your permission to quote from your response and name you, but this will be on an opt-in basis. You can view a full description of our personal data policy here. At any point you may save your response to continue later before submitting.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Migration Advisory Committee

mac@homeoffice.gov.uk

You can find guidance which accompanies the CfE questionnaire on our webpage.

Section A: About you and the organisations you represent

To start with, we'd like to get some details about you and the organisations on behalf of which you are responding.

A1. What is the name of your organisation?

_____

A2. What is your email address?

_____

A3. How many organisations or members do you represent?
(If you represent organisations, this does not include the number of employees in an organisation, but the number of organisations you represent only)

_____

A4. Thinking of the organisations or members you represent, in general are staff concentrated in specific UK countries/regions or are they UK wide?

- Concentrated in specific regions/nations
- UK-wide
- Don't know

A5. And which region(s) or country(ies) are these organisations or staff concentrated?

Please select all that apply

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- London
- South East
- South West

- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- All regions/countries
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

A6. Thinking of the organisations or members you represent, please select all the relevant sectors they cover from the list below:
For more information about the sectors please refer to the link below:
https://resources.companieshouse.gov.uk/sic/">sic/

Please select all that apply

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Mining and Quarrying
- Manufacturing
- Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air conditioning supply
- Water supply, Sewerage, Waste management and Remediation activities
- Construction
- Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles
- Transportation and Storage
- Accommodation and Food Service Activities
- Information and Communication
- Financial and Insurance Activities
- Real Estate Activities
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities
- Administrative and Support Service Activities
- Education
- Human Health and Social Work Activities
- Arts, Entertainment and Recreation
- Other Service Activities
- Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods
- Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies
- We operate across all sectors
- Don't know

A7. Thinking of the organisations you represent and their number of employees, select the <u>main</u> size bands that they cover.

Please select all that apply
- 0-9 employees
- 10-49 employees
- 50-249 employees
- 250-499 employees
- 500-4,999
- 5,000+
- Don't know
- Prefer not to say

A8. Are the majority of organisations that you represent roughly of a similar size in terms of the number of employees, (e.g. most SME's or most large organisations)?

Please select one option
- Yes
- No
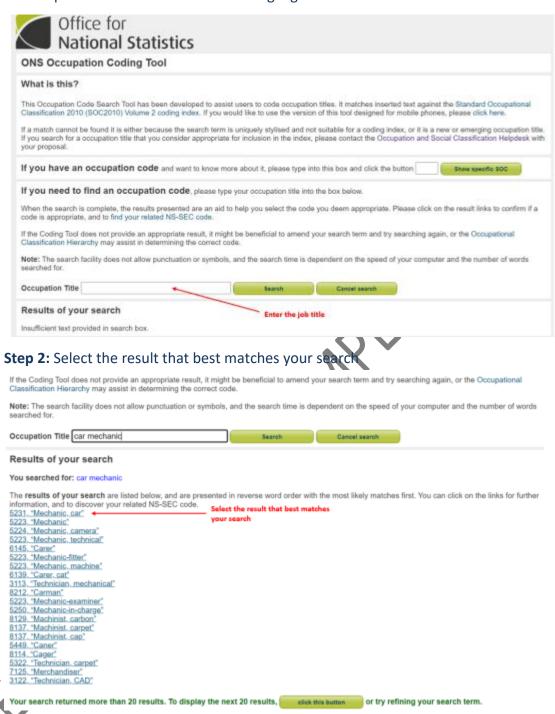- Don't know

Section B: Occupations in shortage

In this section you will be asked to provide the job title(s) and corresponding Standard Occupation Classification (SOC) codes for the jobs which the organisations you represent have found hard to fill in the past 12 months. Only include jobs which you think will be particularly helpful to have on the SOL; these are jobs which the organisations you represent have had difficulties in recruiting from the resident labour market.

How to find the SOC code for an occupation

In order for us to be able to make valid comparisons it is important that you match as closely as possible the job you have in mind to the correct 4-digit Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code. A SOC code is a common classification of occupational information used in the UK which classifies jobs in terms of their skill level and skill content.

To do this we recommend you make use of the coding tool from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), linked below. We will assume that your response to the rest of this questionnaire will be in reference to the jobs which you have identified here.

Step 1: Follow the ONS 2010 SOC toolkit here and enter the name of the job you want to find an occupation code for in the text box highlighted below.

Step 2: Select the result that best matches your search

Step 3: Check the match by reviewing the description of the occupation code, the tasks required, and the jobs related with that code. You can find this by scrolling down the page.

5231: VEHICLE TECHNICIANS, MECHANICS AND ELECTRICIANS

Job description:
Vehicle technicians, mechanics and electricians accept calls for help and repair and service the mechanical parts and electrical/electronic circuitry and components of cars, lorries, buses, motorcycles and other motor vehicles, and repair and service auto air-conditioning systems.

Entry requirements of this job:
There are no formal academic entry requirements, although some employers may require GCSEs/S grades or an equivalent qualification. Training is undertaken off- and on-the-job. NVQs/SVQs at Levels 2 and 3 are available. Apprenticeships at NVQ/SVQ Levels 2 and 3 are available and take three to four years to complete.

Tasks required by this job include:
- visually checks, test drives or uses test equipment to diagnose engine and mechanical faults;
- removes, dismantles, repairs and replaces defective parts and prepares new parts using appropriate tools;
- reassembles, tests, adjusts and tunes the appropriate parts, systems or entire engine;
- carries out routine maintenance checks on oil and air filters, brakes and other vehicle parts/systems;
- diagnoses faults in electrical/electronic circuitry, removes faulty components and fits replacements;
- checks condition of electrical/electronic systems and carries out servicing tasks;
- installs additional electrical amenities such as radio/CD players, aerials;
- repairs and services air conditioning, heating and engine-cooling systems.

NS-SEC categorisations:
The simplified NS-SEC analytic class for this code is 5
The simplified NS-SEC operational category for this code is 11.1
To find your exact NS-SEC code, please use the NS-SEC Coding Tool.

Jobs related to this code:
- Auto electrician
- Car mechanic
- HGV mechanic
- Mechanic (garage)
- MOT tester
- Motor mechanic
- Motor vehicle technician
- Technician (motor vehicles)

This unit group is part of:
- Minor Group 523: VEHICLE TRADES
- Sub-Major Group 52: SKILLED METAL, ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC TRADES
- Major Group 5: SKILLED TRADES OCCUPATIONS

Step 4: If you are unhappy with the match suggested by the tool, go back to step 2 and select another suggested match and/or go back to step 1 and alter your search term.

In this example we are happy with the match and can conclude that the job "Car Mechanic" is associated with occupation code 5231

B1. Using the ONS toolkit below, please tell us about the jobs that the organisations you represent said were hard to fill in the past 12 months.

You can provide up to a maximum of 5 occupations

Complete the field(s) below by telling us:
- The occupation SOC Code(s)

Occupation SOC code
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

B2. What is the job title, and where are these jobs likely to be based?

Occupation	What is the job title?	Where are these jobs likely to be based?
1. Occupation 1 carried over from B1		
2........		
3.		
4.		
5.		

B3. If known, approximately how many vacancies are there for the jobs stated?
Tell us:

- How many jobs have remained unfilled
- How many vacancies you think are expected over the next 12 months, tell us why
- Tell us how you know this
- In which region/country of the UK these jobs are likely to be based

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Section B: Shortage Indicators

This section presents the data that the MAC considers on shortage. In this section you will be asked how the data on pay, hours worked, number of people employed, and vacancies compares to the experiences of the organisations or members you represent.

You will be presented with 4 charts in an Excel dashboard along with instructions (in the excel

dashboard) on how to bring up the relevant data for your jobs.

Please click on here to download the Excel dashboard. Once you have looked at the charts for your jobs, please answer the questions below.

B4. How similar or different is Chart A on pay, compared with the experiences of the organisations you are representing?
- Very similar
- Similar
- About the same
- Different
- Very different
- Don't know

B5. Tell us more about your answer to the previous question
- Why you think the data is similar or different compared with the experiences of the organisations you are representing;
- If the organisations you are representing pay below the general threshold, tell us to what extent they are able to increase pay;
- If there are specific differences which you think might relate to the location of the job(s), please explain.

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B6. How similar or different is Chart B on hours worked, compared with the experiences of the organisations you are representing?
- Very similar
- Similar
- About the same
- Different
- Very different
- Don't know

B7. Tell us more about your answer to the previous question
Why you think the data is similar or different compared with the experiences of the organisations you are representing? If there are specific differences which you think might relate to the location of the job(s), please explain.

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B8. How similar or different is Chart C on employment, compared with the experiences of the organisations you are representing?
- Very similar
- Similar
- About the same
- Different
- Very different
- Don't know

B9. Tell us more about your answer to the previous question

Why you think the data is similar or different compared with the experience of the organisations you are representing? If there are specific differences which you think might relate to the location of the job(s), please explain.

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B10. How similar or different is Chart D on vacancies, compared with the experiences of the organisations you are representing?
- Very similar
- Similar
- About the same
- Different
- Very different
- Don't know

B11. Tell us more about your answer to the previous question
Why you think the data is similar or different compared with the experience of the organisations you are representing? If there are specific differences which you think might relate to the location of the job(s), please explain.

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B12. Please tell us about other data which you think might be relevant in assessing shortage for the jobs which you have mentioned.

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Section C: Why an occupation should be on the SOL

In this section we will ask you some questions about why you think a job should be on the SOL. This section is the main part of the questionnaire, and it consists of 3 parts. The questions in this section are about understanding why migration is a sensible response to shortage. Please let us know of any factors which are specific to the job such as the nature of the job or location. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples or case studies to illustrate or support your response.

Section C: part 1

In this part, we will ask you to tell us:
- Why jobs are hard to fill from the current resident labour market, as reported by the organisations or members you represent;
- The types of skills and experience required for those jobs and why;
- How (if at all) any changes to recruitment have been experienced as a result of recent events such as the ending of freedom of movement or COVID-19;
- Retention as experienced by the organisations or members you represent.

C1. Why are jobs which you have referred to throughout this CfE, hard to fill as reported by the organisations or members you represent?

If there are any factors specific to the job such as the nature of the job or location, please let us know. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples or case studies to illustrate or support your response.

To help you think about your response, we have provided examples of recruitment issues commonly reported by employers below:

- Difficulties in finding applicants with the required skills and or qualifications required for the job;
- Difficulties in finding applicants with the right experience for the job;
- The job is perceived as being unattractive therefore attracts fewer applicants;
- Evolving skill requirements for a job.

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C2. Which skills do the organisations or members you represent most commonly find hard to fill and why?

Tell us:

- What these skills are;
- Why they may be hard to fill from the current resident labour market.

If there are any factors specific to the job such as the nature of the job or location, please let us know. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples to illustrate or support your response.

To help you think about your response we have provided some examples of the skills commonly reported by employers below (this list is not exhaustive).

- Instructing, teaching or training people
- Reading and understanding instructions, guidelines, manuals or reports
- Sales or customer handling skills
- Writing instructions, guidelines, manuals or reports
- Persuading or influencing others
- Basic, more complex numerical or statistical skills and understanding
- Managing or motivating other staff
- Communicating in a foreign language
- Setting objectives for others and planning human, financial and other resource
- Manual dexterity, for example to amend, repair, assemble, construct or adjust things
- Technical or job specific skills or knowledge needed to perform in the role
- Adapting to new equipment or materials, knowledge of products/services offered by your organisation and others
- Computer literacy basic, advanced or specialist IT skills
- Driving skills/licences

To help you think about your response, we have provided some examples of why these skills may be hard to recruit (this list is not exhaustive).

- A lack of supply of local courses which train in these skills
- Skills may be new/emerging
- Lack of demographics with these skills
- Require a large volume of people with these skills

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C3. What level of experience is required for these jobs and why?

If there are any factors specific to the job, such as the nature of the job or location, please let us know. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples to illustrate or support your response.

To help you think about your response, we have provided some explanations about why jobs may require some experience (this list is not exhaustive).
- Tasks are required to be done independently or with minimal supervision
- It is a leadership role
- It requires subject knowledge before the job
- Particular technical skills which can only be learned on the job

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C4. In the past 2 years, COVID-19 and other changes such as the ending of freedom of movement on 31st December 2020 have often changed the way employers recruit. With reference to the past 2 years, what changes (if any) have the organisations you represent experienced when recruiting/finding workers?

The ending of the freedom of movement refers to the end of reciprocal non-visa travel and work arrangements between the UK and EU countries which came into effect on the 31st of December 2020 following the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). EU, European Economic Area (EEA), or Swiss citizens living in the UK before the 31st of December 2020 were required to apply for the EU settlement scheme to continue living in the UK after the 30th of June 2021 (this does not include the Republic or Ireland).

If there are any factors specific to the job, such as the nature of the job or location, please let us know. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples to illustrate or support your response.

In your response tell us:

- How you previously recruited before COVID-19/ ending of freedom of movement and whether this has changed;
- Who tended to fill these jobs;
- Whether applicants found within the UK or from abroad;
- How long on average these workers stay in post and if this has changed;
- Other legislative context which may have changed the situation.

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C5. Have the organisations or members you represent experienced difficulties with retaining staff in the past year?

If there are any factors specific to the job, such as the nature of the job or location, please let us know. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples to illustrate or support your response.

Tell us:

- What you think the causes might be;
- Where staff are moving to, such as a similar occupation with another organisation, a different occupation or leaving work;
- Whether the organisations you represent have experienced EU workers with settled status leaving and not returning, if so please send us any supporting data;
- What age group of workers are being lost or employers are struggling to retain;
- If applicable, what the organisations you represent are doing to improve this.

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Section C: part 2

In this part, we will ask you about the steps the organisations you represent have taken to overcome difficulties in recruiting for those hard-to-fill jobs. Please provide as much information as you can with evidence to support your responses.

When responding to the questions be specific about which SOC codes you are referring to.

You will also be asked:

- What steps the **organisations you represent** have taken to overcome difficulties in recruiting for those hard to fill jobs;
- If you are a trade body or an association which represents businesses within a specific sector, you should also tell us **what your organisation** has done to help ease recruitment difficulties within your sector;
- The effectiveness of steps taken by your organisation and those you represent to ease recruitment difficulties.

C6. Which of the following steps have the organisations that you represent taken to overcome difficulties in filling vacancies for those hard to fill vacancies?

If you are a trade body or an association which represents businesses within a specific sector, tell us about what your organisation has done to help ease the recruitment difficulties for jobs within your sector.

If there are any factors specific to the job, such as the nature of the job or location, please let us know. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples to illustrate or support your response.

To help you think about your response we have provided some examples of the strategies commonly reported by employers below (this list is not exhaustive).

- Automating roles to reduce the amount of labour required
- Increasing salaries
- Increasing the training given to existing workforce
- Redefining existing jobs
- Increasing advertising/recruitment spend
- Using new recruitment methods or channels
- Using existing networks to recruit such as through staff referrals
- Recruiting workers who are non-UK nationals
- Increasing/expanding trainee or apprentice programmes
- Bringing in contractors to do the work or contracting it out
- Being prepared to offer training to less well qualified recruits

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C7. How effective are each of the strategies mentioned in the previous question in managing hard-to-fill vacancies, and why?

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C8. If you are a trade body or an association which represents businesses within a specific sector, to what extent has your organisation been involved in the development of training for the businesses you represent?

Tell us:

- Whether your organisation has developed the training content from scratch;
- Whether your organisation has tailored the content of external training to make it suitable for the needs of the organisations you represent;
- Whether your organisation has had no involvement in designing the training content;
- What training has been developed and why;
- Whether your organisation would have liked to have been involved in designing the content of training but were unable to (please tell us what the reasons were);
- How useful or successful any training in which your organisation was involved has been.

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Section C: part 3

This is the final part of Section C. We will ask you about the impact of having an occupation on the SOL. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples or case studies to illustrate or support your response.

C9. Why do you think these occupations should be on the SOL?

If there are any factors specific to the job, such as the nature of the job or location, please let us know. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples to illustrate or support your response.

Tell us:
- What tangible impact (if any) would it have to the organisations you represent in terms of meeting recruitment needs;
- What difference (if any) will there be in terms of salaries offered to workers;
- Wider possible economic and/or social benefits if there is evidence of this;
- Other impacts to the organisation you represent.

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C10. What options would the organisations or members that you represent consider to fill those hard to fill jobs, if those jobs were not included on the SOL?

If there are any factors specific to the job such as the nature of the job or location please let us know. It will be helpful to us if you can provide examples to illustrate or support your response.

Tell us about:
- Changes to investment;
- Changes to recruitment practices;
- Changes to job specifications, such as if jobs can be done remotely;
- Changes to production output or strategy;
- Other considerations.

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C11. What impact (if any) would <u>not</u> having a job on the SOL have to the organisations or members which you represent?

Tell us about the following impacts (if any):
- On service delivery;
- Economic impacts;

- Knock-on effect to other industries;
- Wellbeing of individuals or other social impacts;
- Anything else.

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C12. Do you have any other comments?

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C13. If you have supplementary information or data which directly relates to your response to this CfE questionnaire, please attach here. If there are specific pages you want us to view, please list them.

_____

Section D: Closing questions

Thank you for completing this questionnaire on the SOL. We have a final few questions about how we use your response to this questionnaire and about contacting you in the future.

D1. Would you be happy for us to quote from your responses to this CfE?
- Yes
- No

D2. Would you be happy for us to name your organisation in the published report?
- Yes
- No

D3. Would you be happy for us or Revealing Reality, who are independent research contractors appointed by the MAC, to recontact you in the next 12 months to invite you to take part in follow-up research regarding similar issues covered in this questionnaire?

- Yes
- No

D4. And would you be willing for us to contact you if we needed to clarify or supplement responses you have given in this questionnaire?

- Yes
- No

D5. Have you attended a MAC stakeholder event for the SOL?

- Yes
- No

D6. If you haven't attended a MAC stakeholder event for the SOL, please tell us how you heard about this Call for Evidence questionnaire?

_____

D7. Would you like to be invited to a future stakeholder event?

- Yes
- No