

MAC Call for Evidence on the Shortage Occupation List – responding in a personal capacity

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 updated 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](#).

REFERENCE ONLY - COMPLETE VIA WEB LINK

Section A: About You

Thank you for your interest in completing this questionnaire on the Shortage Occupation List. To start with, we would like to get some details about you. This information will allow us to understand more about you and your reason for completing this questionnaire but will not be used in any way to identify you (see our webpage for our privacy information note).

A1. What is your email address?

A2. In which region/country of the UK do you live?

If you live outside the UK please state

- North East
- North West
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- East Midlands
- West Midlands
- East of England
- London
- South East
- South West
- Scotland
- Wales
- Northern Ireland
- Outside the UK

A3. If you have ticked 'Outside the UK' in the previous question, please tell us which country you are located in

A4. To help us understand the context in which you are responding, please tell us whether you are responding to this CfE for any of the reasons below:

Tell us:

(Select one option)

- If you are an employee of an organisation which has or previously has used the SOL
- If you are an employee who has been recruited to work via the SOL in your current or previous job
- If you are an employee and have not been recruited to work via the SOL.
- If you are an employer and would like to provide your personal view which does not represent the views of your organisation
- If you are an employer and would like to provide a view of your previous experience of the SOL
- If you are an employer and would like to provide a view without any experience of using the SOL
- If you are responding for another reason

A5. If responding to this CfE for another reason, please tell us the reasons for your interest in completing this questionnaire

Section B. Occupations in shortage

B1. What are your perspectives on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL)?

- What jobs you think are in shortage and should be added to the SOL, tell us why
- Other comments

Section C: Closing questions

We have a few questions which ask about how we use your response to this questionnaire and about contacting you in the future for follow up research. We also ask a question about your personal characteristics, but this question is optional.

C1. Would you be happy for us to quote from your response to this CfE?

- Yes
- No

C2. 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

C3. 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

C4. Have you attended a stakeholder event for the SOL?

- Yes
- No

C5. If you haven't attended a stakeholder event for the SOL, how did you hear about this Call for Evidence questionnaire?

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