

Expansion of the shortage of occupation list

British based businesses will have improved access to skilled workers following changes to the Immigration Rules announced by the immigration minister today (Monday 9 September).

The changes mean that occupations such as veterinarians, architects and web designers will be added to the shortage occupation list (SOL), giving people coming to the UK to work in these industries priority in securing a Tier 2 work visa, over occupations not on the list.

It also means that employers can advertise job vacancies for the occupations included to all nationalities as soon as it's available, making it easier for them to access the international talent they need.

Immigration Minister Seema Kennedy said:

Giving British based businesses the access to the brightest and best global talent is a key priority for this government.

That is why we have made it easier for employers to hire the skilled workers, such as vets and web designers, that this country needs to flourish.

The Tier 2 shortage of occupation list (SOL) is a list of occupations recognised by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) as being in national shortage, which they assess would be sensible to fill, in part, through non-EEA migration.

Reflecting recommendations by the independent Migration Advisory Committee in its review of the shortage occupation list in May 2019, today the Immigration Rules have been amended accordingly, putting the changes into law.

When reviewing the shortage of occupation list, the MAC considers a range of factors including whether the role is in national shortage and whether it is sensible to fill with migrant workers.

In addition to expanding the SOL, the Immigration Rules have been amended to further demonstrate the government's commitment to transferring the 480 unaccompanied children under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 as soon as possible.

The updated rules will ensure that those children transferring under section 67 are granted with 'section 67 leave' upon arrival. This form of leave allows them to study, work, access public funds and healthcare, and is a route to settlement which they would not ordinarily have had. Currently, those who transfer to the UK under section 67 only receive 'section 67 leave'

if their asylum application is unsuccessful.

It will provide the children, and the local authorities who will care for them, with additional reassurance and guarantee their status in the UK at the earliest opportunity.

The Home Office has also streamlined English language testing ensuring that doctors, dentists, nurses and midwives who have already passed an English language test accepted by the relevant professional body, do not have to sit another test before entry to the UK on a Tier 2 visa. This change will make sure that hospitals and medical practices across the country will be able to access the staff they need more quickly.