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BY E-MAIL ONLY

20 November 2009

Dear Sir/Madam,

PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL SHORTAGE OCCUPATION LISTS

The Migration Advisory Committee is about to launch its third partial review of the Government's shortage occupation lists and we are writing to relevant stakeholders to request evidence.

In September 2008 the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) published its first report recommending to Government shortage occupation lists for the UK and Scotland. We completed our first partial review in April 2009 and, on 21 October, reported to Government with our second partial review. All past MAC shortage occupation reports can be accessed at: www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/mac.

We are now in the process of beginning our third review, which will be considerably smaller in scope than previous reviews. This is because we have now reviewed all occupations that we originally recommended for the shortage occupation lists in September 2008 and next autumn we will complete a full review of all skilled occupations. This review, therefore, only includes four occupations – pharmacists, fishermen, engineering technicians, and musicians.

In the case of musicians we announced we would review the occupation following representations that we had previously defined their inclusion on the shortage occupation list too broadly. The Government asked us to review pharmacists and engineering technicians, with specific reference to the aircraft component manufacturers again for this review. If there are other engineering technician jobs where the situation has substantially changed since our last call for evidence, or there was previously an issue but evidence wasn't submitted, we will give new detailed evidence received consideration for this review. However, we will also cover engineering technicians again when we review the whole labour market for our autumn 2010 review.

A case can be put to the Committee at any time during the year that it should review an occupation. The Committee will announce in its next report an intention to review the occupation if:

Chairman: Professor David Metcalf CBE

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- the submission provides good evidence, but it has been received too late to be considered for the forthcoming review; or
- the submission provides partial evidence that needs to be corroborated and further investigated.

In exceptional circumstances, where the submission provides good and relevant evidence, it has been received in time, and there is a case for an urgent review, the occupation may be fully reviewed immediately in time for the next report.

In some cases, such as where the MAC has recently reviewed an occupation, or where previous analysis has shown the occupation is not skilled, the MAC may decline a request to review an occupation.

Occupations are reviewed against the Committee's methodology of skilled, shortage and sensible.

The Committee's three-stage approach is as follows:

- first, the Committee consider whether the individual occupations or categories of jobs are sufficiently **skilled** to be included (need to be at NVQ Level 3 or above);
- then, the Committee assess whether there is a **shortage** of labour within each skilled occupation; and
- finally, it considers whether it is **sensible** to allow employers to fill these shortages from outside the EEA.

To reach its conclusions the Committee uses a methodology that combines 'top-down' analysis of national data and surveys with 'bottom-up' evidence primarily submitted by stakeholders. The Committee also conduct visits to employers and employer organisations, throughout the UK, to contribute towards 'bottom-up' evidence.

If you wish to submit evidence in relation to those occupations we are currently reviewing: pharmacists, engineering technicians (with specific reference to the aircraft component manufacturers) fishermen or musicians – you may do so up until **29 January 2010**. You may have evidence you can provide us with that would point towards a need for these occupations to be on the shortage occupation list, or conversely that they should not.

I attach a simple guide to submitting evidence to the Committee. The guide gives some useful tips on the kind of evidence required to fulfil the skilled, shortage, sensible criteria.

We need to submit our report to Government by April 2010 and, therefore, need your response by **29 January 2010** in order to fully assess the information you provide us with. This timescale also takes into account sufficient time to present findings to the Committee, for them to take a decision and ultimately the time it takes to publish the update.

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It would be helpful if you could notify us as soon as possible if there are other key employers, organisations and individuals who the MAC should be dealing with in connection with these occupations so that we can approach them for their input too. We are happy to take suggestions regarding specific employers and bodies the MAC may wish to visit in order to inform their work.

If you have any queries or would like a meeting to discuss further please do not hesitate to contact me, or colleagues within the secretariat, via our email address – mac@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Yours faithfully,



Mark Franks
Head of secretariat

Job titles and occupation groups being reviewed (with SOC codes):

Pharmacists (2213)

Musicians (3415)

Engineering Technician, with specific reference to aircraft component manufacturing engineers (3113)

Fishermen (5119/9119)