

**MINUTES OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE  
MIGRATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON 12 SEPTEMBER  
2008**

Present:

Chair	Professor David Metcalf
Members	Dr Diane Coyle Dr Martin Ruhs Professor Jonathan Wadsworth Professor Robert Wilson Professor Mike Campbell (Ex-officio member) Jonathan Sedgwick (Government observer)
Secretariat	Mark Franks (Head of secretariat) Stephen Earl Vanna Aldin Cordella Dawson Anna Downs Dan James Anne Ball
Observers	Andy Honeyman (UKBA)
Presenter	Ragnar Clifford (UKBA)

**Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions**

1. The Chair welcomed Andy Honeyman (UKBA) to the meeting. He said Andy has been restored as an observer and would again be attending future MAC meetings. The Chair confirmed that the agenda has been re-ordered to take agenda item 6 (Oral evidence session for A2 work – Government evidence) first and then agenda item 5 (Paper 8.3 – Progress on A2 work).

**Agenda Item 6 - Oral evidence session for A2 work – Government evidence**

2. The Chair introduced Ragnar Clifford (UKBA), and thanked him for agreeing to provide a presentation to the Committee on the Government's position regarding the restrictions imposed on A2 nationals. Ragnar gave an overview of how the A2 restrictions work.

## Agenda Item 5 - Paper 8.3 – Progress on A2 work

3. The Committee confirmed that the issue on which the Government seeks the MAC's advice is as follows: *The Government is obliged by EU law to notify the European Commission if we intend to maintain labour market restrictions on nationals of Romania and Bulgaria beyond January 2009. We would therefore like you to consider what the likely impact on the UK labour market would be of relaxing existing restrictions, and whether it would be sensible to do so. I should be grateful if you would take into consideration any issues specifically relating to Scotland, if appropriate.* It was noted that the advice is requested by the end of October.
4. The Committee agreed to reply to this request in the form of a short report to be completed in line with the Government's timetable.
5. The secretariat said that it is setting up a targeted gathering of evidence, including evidence to be taken from academics and other experts at the next MAC meeting planned for 26 September. The secretariat said that those invited to give evidence on 26 September include Migration Watch, the Institute of Public Policy Research and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.
6. The secretariat confirmed that in addition to the oral evidence, a letter will be sent to the Permanent Secretaries at various government departments, including the Home Office, HM Treasury, the Department of Health and the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, informing each department of how the MAC is planning to approach this work and inviting them to input written evidence if they wish. The secretariat also confirmed that a letter has been sent to selected academics and other experts inviting them to provide their views on the impact of relaxing restrictions.
7. The secretariat said it is also organising five meetings to take place over 2 days on 2nd / 3rd October 2008 to take evidence from representatives from the sectors of hospitality, social care, food processing, construction, and agriculture. They confirmed that a meeting of the MAC Stakeholder Panel has also been organised for 3 October 2008, which will provide the Committee with an opportunity to discuss the Committee's work with the Panel members.
8. The secretariat gave an overview of the in-house analysis, including creating a list of references relevant to the A2 question scored on relevance and quality. The secretariat also said they are setting up a database to record the data analysed. They also confirmed that they are requesting country information from the UK embassies in Sofia and Bucharest and have started to source some basic economic and migration data on A8 and A2 countries.
9. The Committee said that was pleased with the amount of work that the secretariat had done to date. However, they felt that there was too much

emphasis on the UK/ Bulgaria and Romania perceptive and that it is important to have a wider perspective on what is happening in other EU countries.

## **Agenda Item 2 - Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 July 2008**

10. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed. Professor Mike Campbell asked that they record his apologies for not being able to attend.

## **Agenda Item 3 - Paper 8.1 – Update on shortage occupation list report including next steps**

11. The secretariat gave an update on the outcome of the launch of the MAC shortage occupation lists and report on September 9th. The Committee was told that the event went well and ran smoothly.
12. The secretariat said that the Chair gave recorded interviews to Channel 4 news, BBC news and Radio West Midlands and that he also had live interviews with the Today programme on Radio 4 and BBC TV Breakfast News. He would also be interviewed by BBC Radio Scotland for broadcast on Sunday 14 September.
13. The secretariat also confirmed that the launch of the report had been widely covered in the media. In terms of TV coverage, the secretariat informed the Committee that the MAC report and shortage occupation list was the lead item on the BBC Ten o'clock news and the Channel 4 evening news and the reports were reasonably well balanced.
14. The secretariat reported that they had received some communication from stakeholders asking why their occupations were not on the list.
15. The Committee said that it was important to note that there may be international interest in the MAC's future work.
16. The next steps for the shortage occupation work were also discussed. It was agreed that if, as expected, the Government asked the MAC to keep the shortage occupations lists under review, a partial review of the lists would be carried out over the next six months.
17. The secretariat said that it had began discussions with health sector representatives with the aim of receiving robust and unified evidence for consideration in the MAC's revisions to the shortage lists.
18. The secretariat also confirmed that over the next couple of months it would begin to examine those occupations which were classified as skilled and passed on at least 50 per cent of the available shortage indicators, but for which insufficient evidence was received. The secretariat said that it would seek initial input from the relevant Sector Skills Councils or, if necessary, other representative bodies in order to examine the potential shortages in these occupations in greater detail and would use the above discussions

to establish which other employers, organisations and individuals to consult.

19. Andy Honeyman (UKBA) said that it is a strong possibility that the Government would ask the MAC to keep the shortage occupation lists under review. He confirmed that the MAC report and the recommended lists would be circulated across Government for comments.
20. The Committee discussed the proposed programme of analysis work required to improve methodology and to refine the shortage indicators. They agreed that it was not a priority to tackle the skill refinements at this time and the shortage refinements will be wrapped up in a project under the research programme – see agenda item 4.

#### **Agenda Item 4 - Paper 8.2 – Research programme update**

21. The Committee discussed the research programme proposed for this financial year (2008/09). It was agreed that:
  - i. the shortage improvements should be combined into a commissioned project;
  - ii. a project on the theory of shortage should be commissioned (building on the York consulting work);
  - iii. work should begin on progressing projects 7,8,9 in paper 8.2. However, projects 5 and 6 in that paper were thought to be a lower priority and should be progressed over a longer time scale.

#### **Agenda Item 7 – Party conferences – oral item**

22. The secretariat said that with the Party Conference season beginning shortly, it is timely to remind the Committee that under the terms of their contracts, they are permitted to attend any Party Conference as private individuals, but not in their capacity as members of the MAC.

#### **Agenda Item 8 - Date of, and agenda for next meeting**

23. The secretariat confirmed that the next formal Committee meeting will be held on 26 September 2008. The Chair asked for the meeting arranged for 19 December 2008 to be re-arranged for 12 December.

#### **Agenda Item 9 - AOB**

24. Jonathan Sedgwick (Government observer) said he wanted to place on record that the UKBA is grateful for the work that the MAC has done in producing the shortage occupation list.

**MAC secretariat  
September 2008**