



Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

7 October 2019

Dear Yvette,

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES REQUIRED TO THE SHORTAGE OCCUPATION LIST

As the Committee will be aware, on 9 September, the Government laid in Parliament amended Immigration Rules, which have the effect of regulating people's entry to and stay in the UK. Part of these changes included updates to the Tier 2 Shortage Occupation List (SOL), set out at Appendix K of the published Rules. The SOL – set on the advice of the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) – provides employers and migrants with particular benefits when recruited into jobs on the list, recognising that they are in national shortage and beneficial to the UK economy.

In addition, the Tier 2 changes exempted a number of medical professionals, including doctors and nurses, from English language requirements, if they have already demonstrated their language proficiency when obtaining their relevant professional registration. More widely, the changes provided an improved offer to those in PhD level occupations, by exempting them from the Tier 2 limits and allowing them to undertake research overseas without this affecting their ability to apply for settlement.

I regret to inform the Committee that due to a small administrative oversight, two minor, technical errors were made in the updates to the SOL, affecting the following occupations:

- Social and Humanities Scientists – Archaeologists (Standard Occupation Classification Code 2114) recommended for inclusion by the MAC, were inadvertently omitted.
- Quantity Surveyors (Standard Occupation Classification Code 2433), not recommended for inclusion by the MAC, were added.

I would like to assure the Committee that my officials are taking appropriate action to ensure that no individual or employer would be adversely impacted from the point at which the rules went live on 6 October, and we are issuing operational instructions which will ensure these occupations are treated in line with all other jobs on the SOL.

In practice, this will mean that employers of overseas workers recruited into these posts will not need to advertise the posts for 28 days in advance of recruiting from overseas (known as the Resident Labour Market Test) and applications for these jobs will be prioritised within the Tier 2 annual cap. Workers in these roles will broadly benefit from reduced application fees and will be exempt from the minimum salary threshold required to settle in the UK after five years on the route, currently £37,800.

Details of these arrangements will also be included in the updated external policy guidance for both applicants and sponsors under Tier 2 (General) going live on 6 October.

I have asked my officials to correct Appendix K at the next available opportunity to amend the Rules.

I will arrange for a copy of this letter to be placed in the libraries of both Houses.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Seema Kennedy', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Seema Kennedy OBE MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State