



Mr Iain Baxter  
Chief Executive  
Scotland Food & Drink  
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DECS Reference: MIN/1089980/24

6 March 2024

Dear Mr Baxter,

Thank you for your letter of 6 February 2024 to the Home Secretary, also signed on behalf of industry partners, about the changes to the Skilled Worker immigration route as part of the measures to address net migration levels. I am replying as the Minister of State for Legal Migration and the Border.

On 4 December 2023, the Prime Minister and Home Secretary announced a series of measures to reduce net migration and curb immigration abuse. These measures include:

- Increasing the earnings thresholds for those arriving on the Skilled Worker route, with the minimum threshold rising by 48% from £26,200 to £38,700 from April 2024. Those coming on the Health and Social Care Visa route will be exempt from the £38,700 salary threshold applied to skilled workers, so that we can continue to bring the healthcare workers that our care sector and NHS need. We are also exempting teachers on national pay scale occupations.
- Removing the 20% going rate discount for occupations on the Shortage Occupation List (SOL), which will be renamed the Immigration Salary List (ISL).
- Commissioning the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to review the composition of the ISL in line with the increased salary thresholds.

No measures introduced as part of this package will be applied retrospectively to people in the affected visa categories.

For clarity, I can confirm that up until the point with which the Immigration Rules have effect, those already in the Skilled Worker route should be exempt from the new median salary levels when they change sponsor, extend, or settle. However, we would expect their pay to progress at the same rate as resident workers; therefore, they would be subject to the updated 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles using the latest pay data when they next make an application to change employment, extend their stay, or settle. This is in line with normal practice.

Measures relating to salary thresholds will be introduced in Immigration Rules in April 2024, with implementation shortly after.

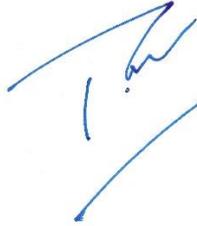
On 17 January we commissioned the MAC to carry out a rapid review of the SOL to inform which occupations should be temporarily added to an ISL from early April. The Immigration Rules we intend to lay on 14 March will remove the 20% going rate discount for occupations on the SOL, as well as temporarily add any occupations as recommended by the MAC to the new ISL.

Whilst I am afraid that at this time I do not have availability to meet, the Government is now considering the recommendations from the Independent Review into Labour Shortages and intends on publishing a Government response in early 2024.

At the same time as the response, the Government will set out how it will support the sector to access the labour it needs, alongside actions to reduce the sector's reliance on migrant labour, including via our work on automation and promoting domestic labour procurement and training.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Pursglove', is centered on the page.

**Tom Pursglove MP**  
**Minister of State for Legal Migration and the Border**