

MINUTES OF THE TENTH MEETING OF THE MIGRATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON 24 OCTOBER 2008

Present:

Chair Professor David Metcalf CBE

Dr Diane Coyle
Dr Martin Ruhs
Professor Jonathan Wadsworth
Professor Robert Wilson
Lin Homer
Jonathan Sedgwick
Andy Honeyman
MAC secretariat

Apologies: Professor Mike Campbell

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. Apologies for absence were received from Professor Mike Campbell. The Chair welcomed Lin Homer (Chief Executive, UK Border Agency) to the meeting.
2. Members related any discussions or meetings they had undertaken since the previous meeting. The Chair said that he had a useful meeting with Phil Woolas.

Agenda Item 2 - Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 September 2008

3. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed without amendment.

Agenda Item 3 – Update on panel and sector meetings (oral item)

4. The Committee was told that the session to take evidence from the agriculture, construction, food processing, hospitality and social care sectors, on 2 and 3 October, had provided a good perspective on the views of those in these sectors in relation to the issue of whether to relax, remove or retain the restrictions on A2 nationals. The secretariat said that the Stakeholder Panel had also met at this time to discuss the MAC shortage report and the A2 work.

Agenda Item 4 - Update on Bulgaria and Romania visit (oral item)

5. The Committee heard an account of the visit to Bulgaria and Romania that took place on 7-8 October. In Bulgaria meetings were held with officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Interior, the National Statistics Institute, and the Bulgarian National Bank. In Romania meetings were held with the State Secretary for the Ministry of Labour, the Economy and Finance Ministry, the Romanian Office for Immigration and the International Organisation for Migration. Professor Jonathan Wadsworth and Dr Martin Ruhs who went on the visits said that the meetings provided a useful perspective on the experience and the labour market conditions within those

countries and they felt, overall, that neither the Governments of Bulgaria nor Romania expected a mass exodus if restrictions were lifted.

Agenda Item 5 - Paper 10.1: A2 Report

6. The Committee discussed the latest drafts of chapters 1 to 5. They agreed to some refinement of the text and also that further data or elucidation was needed in some sections. They also asked that the current structure be looked at to ensure that there is more correlation between the A2 question and the MAC shortage work. The Committee also said that the report needed to have an explanation of why the focus was on specific sectors.

Agenda Item 6 – 10.2: Provisional conclusions

7. The Committee discussed chapter 8 of the A2 report, which contained preliminary conclusions.

Agenda Item 7 – Update on shortage work (oral item)

8. The secretariat updated the Committee on work in relation to shortage occupations. The Government response to the recommended shortage occupation list was still to be announced. The secretariat said the Committee expect to be asked to do the first formal update of the shortage lists in March 2009.
9. The secretariat also said that they had discussions with representatives from the health care sector about developing an approach to provide the MAC with robust and co-ordinated evidence and was working with key representatives from the sector to develop better evidence in time for the first update of the lists.
10. The secretariat will write to all Sector Skill Councils to set out how they can help the MAC with gathering evidence in the future. The MAC asked that the webpage be updated to include some information on how to make a submission to the MAC including guidance on sort of evidence that the MAC finds most useful. Jonathan Sedgwick agreed that this above approach would be very helpful as the secretariat had a role to play in ensuring that interested parties understand that MAC methodology particularly in respect of “sensible”.

Agenda Item 8 - Paper 10.3: Update on research projects

11. The secretariat briefly outlined the research projects being commissioned and updated the Committee on progress. It was agreed that a further research paper be tabled at the next MAC meeting.

Agenda Item 9 - Date of, and agenda for, next meeting (to combine Nov/Dec meetings)

12. The secretariat confirmed that the next meeting would be held on 16 December 2008.

Agenda Item 10 – AOB

13. Jonathan Sedgwick discussed the MAC's future work. He said that it was conceivable that there could be substantial work coming the MAC's way but stressed that final decisions had not been taken on these and there would be a need for prior consultation across Government. Lin Homer thanked the Committee for its work in producing the shortage occupation lists.

**MAC secretariat
November 2008**