

MINUTES OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE MIGRATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2008

Present:

Chair	Professor David Metcalf CBE
Members	Dr Diane Coyle Dr Martin Ruhs Professor Jonathan Wadsworth
Secretariat	Mark Franks (Head of secretariat) Stephen Earl Vanna Aldin Andrew Watton Cordella Dawson Dan James Anne Ball
Observers	Andy Honeyman (UKBA)

Agenda Item 1 – Welcome and Introductions

1. Apologies for absence were received from Professor Robert Wilson, Professor Mike Campbell and Jonathan Sedgwick (UKBA Observer).
2. Members related any discussions or meetings they had undertaken since the last meeting. The Chair said that he had received a letter from Lin Homer, Chief Executive of UKBA, congratulating the Committee on the production of their first report on shortage occupations. He had also had a conversation with Liam Byrne who likewise commended members on their work.

Agenda Item 2 - Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2008

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

Agenda Item 6 – Update on A2 work – oral item

4. The secretariat informed the Committee that the Government had extended the deadline for receipt of the Committee's advice on A2 restrictions by two weeks until mid November.
5. The secretariat updated the Committee on the various work areas that were ongoing in connection with the A2 work. A very rough first draft of chapters 1 to 5 of the report were circulated to members of the Committee. Members were asked to review the structure and send in any comments by email. Members were also invited to let the secretariat know if they wanted to be particularly involved in any of the chapters otherwise the secretariat would assign Committee member champions to each chapter.
6. The secretariat also updated the Committee on plans for a visit to Bulgaria and Romania on 6-8 October. Those attending were Professor Jonathan

Wadsworth and Dr Martin Ruhs, and from the secretariat Stephen Earl and Dan James. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office had helped in making the right contacts and a useful itinerary had been drawn up.

7. Information was being collected on what restrictions were currently in place throughout the European Union for the A2 countries. The Chair said that it was also important to try and establish what their intentions were beyond January 2009, as decisions made in other EU states would affect the UK situation and therefore potentially the Committee's advice.
8. The secretariat informed the Committee that a meeting of the Stakeholder Panel had been set for 3 October to update the Panel on both shortage occupation work and A2 work. Meetings of sector representatives to discuss A2 restrictions had also been arranged for 2 and 3 October. The sectors involved were those most likely to be impacted by any changes to A2 worker restrictions - agriculture, social care, hospitality, food processing and construction.

Agenda Item 4 - Oral evidence session for A2 work – external stakeholders

9. The Committee heard oral evidence on the likely impact of changes to restrictions on A2 workers from:
 - Professor Christian Dustmann, Professor of Economics at University College London
 - Simon Kirby, a Research Fellow at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR)
 - Sir Andrew Green, Chairman of Migration Watch UK
10. Each was asked questions relating to the likely impact of either withdrawing or reducing the restrictions on A2 workers.

Agenda Item 5 – Discussion of oral evidence and next steps

11. The Committee discussed the evidence it had heard. The secretariat agreed to write up notes on the evidence received and circulate for comment around the Committee. The information would be taken into account when formulating the Committee's advice.

Agenda Item 7 – Update on shortage occupation work – oral item

12. The secretariat updated the Committee on work in relation to shortage occupations since the last meeting. Discussions had begun with an aim to getting better health sector evidence in time for the first review of the shortage lists. It had been agreed that a workshop would be organised, attended by the Department of Health, the NHS Workforce Review Team, NHS Employers and the sector skills council for the sector – Skills for Health. The aim of the workshop would be to agree a proposal for the presentation of future evidence to the Committee on shortages in the health sector.
13. The secretariat explained that they had met with officials from the DCSF to discuss children and family social workers and confirmed that, for the current

iteration of the report, the Committee had not received evidence relating to this job title. It was agreed that further discussions would take place in connection with the wider review of health sector occupations.

14. The Committee were also committed to reviewing the position in respect of transport planners when Project Brunel had reported. Project Brunel is a national level research project aimed at identifying engineering and planning skills gaps in road and rail industries. The Department for Transport is working with the London Development Agency, the Institution of Highways and Transportation and the Railway Industry Association and are due to publish results of the project soon.
15. The Chairman said that the Government would, in due course, decide whether it would accept the recommended lists as outlined in the Committee's report published in September. It would also need to decide how to deal with lobbying of occupations post-publication of the Committee's report. However, he said that he felt the list should not be manipulated by lobbying on evidence not presented to the Committee. The Committee should be allowed to consider such evidence during its normal cycle of reviews.
16. The UKBA observer said that in many cases an occupation not being on the shortage occupation list would not prevent employers from recruiting migrants from outside the EEA, should it become necessary, via the cumulative points route of Tier 2.

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

17. The secretariat confirmed that the next formal Committee meeting will be held on 17 October 2008 (later changed to 24 October).

Agenda Item 9 - AOB

18. There were no matters of any other business.

**MAC secretariat
October 2008**