



Home Office

House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

15 June 2018

Dear Colleague

I am writing to update you on some of the immigration reforms I have announced this week. These changes demonstrate the Government's commitment to encouraging highly talented workers to come to the UK while also providing protection and support to the most vulnerable.

Tier 2 – highly skilled workers

Firstly, I am making changes to the way places are allocated under the cap for Tier 2, our main immigration route for non-EEA high skilled migrant workers.

Since 2011, Tier 2 (General) has operated an annual cap of 20,700, divided into monthly allocations. The cap was based on the advice of the independent Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) in 2011. It operates by controlling the number of places allocated to UK-based employers who are seeking to recruit a migrant worker where no suitable resident worker can be found.

As you may be aware, the limit has been oversubscribed since December 2017. I have been considering this issue as a matter of priority, given the impact the cap is having particularly on the health sector, but also across other sectors of the economy.

In view of this, and the real pressures which the NHS is currently under, I will be, as a temporary measure, exempting all doctors and nurses from the Tier 2 cap. This change will mean that, from 6 July, doctors and nurses will be able to be sponsored without putting pressure on the entire immigration system. This will also free up space for other highly skilled occupations, such as engineers, IT professionals and teachers which make an important contribution to our economy and the prosperity of our nation.

In parallel to this change, I have also commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) independently to review the composition of the Tier 2 Shortage Occupation List (SOL). This will enable them to look at which posts across all sectors of the economy are in national shortage and should be given priority within the cap. The MAC will report by Spring 2019, as they currently have two significant commissions on EU migration and international students.

Tier 1 – start up visa

As well as making changes to the Tier 2 visa cap, I am also expanding the scope of the Exceptional Talent route. This builds on the doubling of the route to 2,000 places in January this year. The changes will open up the route to include leading fashion designers and a wider pool of TV and film applicants.

From Spring 2019 we will introduce a new Start-up visa for those looking to start their first business in the UK. The new route, which I announced during London Tech Week, will widen our current, successful Graduate Entrepreneur route by opening it up to a wider pool of talented business founders. Applicants will be endorsed by a university (as now) or an approved business sponsor, including accelerators.

Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 leave

I am introducing a bespoke immigration status – section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 leave (‘section 67 leave’) – so that individuals who are relocated to the UK under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (often referred to as the Dubs Amendment), who do not qualify for international protection can remain here long term.

The Government takes the welfare of unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children extremely seriously. We are clear in our commitment to ensuring that the vulnerable children we have transferred to the UK under section 67 will have everything they need to be able to start a new life in the UK. Most of the children who have arrived have already been granted Refugee Leave or humanitarian protection, however there were some who would have been refused under the existing Rules which is why I am creating this new form of leave to ensure all of the children can stay.

In keeping with our commitments in the legislation, and in line with those granted Refugee or humanitarian protection leave, individuals who qualify for section 67 leave will have the right to study, work, access public funds and healthcare and apply for indefinite leave to remain without paying a fee after five years. We are clear that our responsibility to these children does not end when they arrive in the UK: care and support is needed to ensure we safeguard their wellbeing.

I would like to take this opportunity to reassure you that the Government remains committed to transferring the specified number of 480 unaccompanied children under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 as soon as possible. Over 220 children are here and transfers are ongoing. We are working closely with participating States and partners to ensure the safe transfer of children referred. The process for transferring children must be implemented in line with each individual participating State's national laws and, with the best interests of children at the centre of all decisions

I hope you will agree that this announcement further underlines the Government's commitment to fulfilling our obligation, and the spirit the legislation. For the reasons set out above, I hope you can also agree that the Government has taken significant steps to improve an already comprehensive approach to supporting asylum-seeking and refugee children.

New provisions for Afghan interpreters

As I announced on 3 May, I am introducing a dedicated settlement provision in the Immigration Rules to put beyond doubt that Afghan nationals, who worked with our Armed Forces in Afghanistan and have relocated to the UK with their families, will be able to apply to stay permanently. These applications will be free of charge and I will be amending the necessary fees Regulations in October. These changes make clear our commitment to honour their service and ensure they can continue to build their lives here. The changes also implement plans announced on 11 June to extend the ex-gratia redundancy scheme by six years. This ensures those who were made redundant after serving on the front line are rewarded for the risks they took, regardless of when this work took place.

Application process for students

I am also announcing changes to make it easier for students to come and study in UK's world-leading education sector. I am expanding the list of countries from which students will be able to benefit from a streamlined application process. Students from an additional 11 countries, including China, will be able to provide a reduced level of documentation when applying for their Tier 4 visa. All students from these countries still need to meet all requirements under Tier 4 and UKVI reserve the right to request this evidence in full and will do so for a random sample of applications.

Together these changes demonstrate the Government's commitment to a fair and humane immigration system which encourages the brightest and the best to come to

the UK while at the same time provides protection and support to the most vulnerable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Javid', with a small comma at the end.

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP