



16 million workers in the UK would see their jobs open to worldwide competition

Immigration Policy: MW 466

Summary

1. The [recommendations](#) of the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC), published on 28th January, would mean that *the basic salary requirements for hiring some immigrant workers would, in practice, be reduced from £30,000 to not much more than the minimum wage*. Occupations included would even include child minders. A bogus scheme for unskilled workers was also endorsed. And yet there would be no cap on the numbers admitted to the UK under the main work route.

Detail

2. The MAC recommendations would, on their own admission, mean a total of 16 million jobs in the UK open to worldwide competition with no limit on the numbers and, remarkably, *without employers even having to advertise vacancies on the home market*.²

3. The general salary requirement would be lowered from £30,000 a year to £25,600, but workers under the age of 26 on arrival would only need to earn £17,900 – *little more than the minimum-wage*. Moreover, such workers would be able to stay on such a wage for five years – so a 25-year-old could keep working in the UK at this low pay level until the age of 30. The risk is that employers will simply hire non-UK people aged under 26 on the lower salary threshold, rather than raising wages in order to attract some of the four million people in the UK who either would like to work or want more hours of work.

4. At the same time, the qualification requirements would be reduced from degree level to the equivalent of A Level. The MAC have also recommended the inclusion of a range of additional lower-paid roles including construction workers, teaching assistants and even child minders.

5. They have also endorsed the temporary workers scheme outlined in the White Paper published in December 2018. This suggested that low skilled workers should be admitted for eleven months at a time to be followed by a return home for a “cooling off period”. This would clearly be a blatant attempt to manipulate the immigration figures which only include those coming to the UK for twelve months or more.

6. Meanwhile those whose jobs are on the so-called Shortage Occupation List will be able to apply for settlement after five years whatever their salary. Some 9% of UK jobs are now on the list. Other migrants would need a salary of £35,800 per year to qualify for permanent settlement.

Commenting, Mr Alp Mehmet, Chairman of Migration Watch UK said:

“The government are on the verge of decisions that would be disastrous for immigration control. Salary and qualifications would be reduced meaning that, in total, just over 60% of UK jobs would be open to worldwide competition with no limit on the numbers admitted. This would be deeply unwelcome to the 30 million UK adults who want to see immigration reduced. It would also be extremely damaging to the prospects of the Conservative Party at any future election.”

3 February 2020

Notes

1. Based on applying MAC figure of 61% in para 7.80 of their new report to average employee numbers (main job) reported in ONS labour market statistics over period, Jan-Mar 2016 to Oct-Dec 2018.