# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE** | **The Welsh Government’s response to the Migration Advisory Committee’s Call for Evidence – Shortage Occupation List** |
| **DATE** | **25 June 2020** |
| **BY** | **Jeremy Miles MS, Counsel General and Minister for European Transition** |

In March 2020, the UK Government commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) to compile a UK shortage occupation list (SOL), which will primarily focus on occupations at Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) Levels 3-5 (medium skill).This, in effect, will determine which occupations will qualify for a 20% reduction to the salary thresholds for those coming to the UK after the new immigration system is introduced in January 2021.

A copy of the Welsh Government’s detailed response to the Migration Advisory Committee’s Call for Evidence for the Shortage Occupation List is attached below

<https://gov.wales/the-welsh-governments-response-to-the-migration-advisory-committees-call-for-evidence-shortage-occupation-list>

This response is based on a data analysis that replicates the MAC’s methodology, combined with stakeholder evidence which helps to prioritise which occupations it would be sensible to fill through migration. We propose that this list should form the basis of a Welsh SOL as endorsed by the Migration Advisory Committee.

We have provided this response in a context where we believe now is not the right time to be conducting an exercise into our future skills needs as the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the labour market is unfolding and far from certain. This crisis has also thrown into question the wisdom of pressing ahead with an immigration policy that fails to value the contribution of key workers who have sustained many public services during the pandemic, but under the new immigration system will be unable to come to the UK.

The Welsh Government has worked with Welsh stakeholders to determine what occupations should be included on a SOL in Wales. This is based on applying the MAC’s own methodology (modified to reflect data available and smaller sample sizes), supplemented with evidence of shortages from our external stakeholders from a wide range of sectors across Wales following a very well attended and constructive workshop earlier this month.

It is important to note that the rankings highlighted in the analysis reflect how well they meet the shortage criteria set by the MAC but this methodology also requires this high-level picture to be supplemented with stakeholder evidence of where it would be sensible to fill those vacancies from immigration. It is only when these two sources of evidence are combined that a picture of which occupations should be regarded as priorities emerges. Since the Welsh Government does not endorse the UK Government’s determination to include only work at NQF level 3 or above as ‘skilled’, our consideration also includes skills gaps below this threshold.

In the report we highlight a number of key occupations we think should be added to the SOL. In particular we would draw attention to the skills needs of health and social care, manufacturing, digital, trade and creative industries, the food and drink industry including vets, professional and business services, and construction.

We hope that the Welsh Government’s response, underpinned by our evidence, analysis and stakeholder feedback, will be considered carefully by the MAC and will be used as the basis for the UK Government to give Wales its own shortage occupation list, recognising the specific labour market needs in Wales, particularly in social care.