

The Home Secretary has announced today (1 July) that some of the proposed changes set out in the Immigration White Paper will come into effect in just three weeks on 22 July (subject to parliamentary approval), to start “*delivering a complete reset of our immigration system to restore proper control and order*”.

These include:

1. Raising the skills threshold for Skilled Worker visas from RQF Level 3 to RQF Level 6 (graduate level) – this will remove 111 eligible occupations from the current list of eligible SOC codes.
2. Closing the social care worker visa route to overseas visa applications and putting transitional arrangements in place for those already in the UK under this route.
3. Creating a new temporary shortage list for roles below degree level on a time-limited basis, restricted to critical roles only, with strict requirements for sectors to grow domestic skills (the Migration Advisory Committee will be tasked with reviewing this list).

Any employers with plans to sponsor roles below RQF Level 6 should therefore proceed to submit these applications as soon as possible and in any event before 22 July.

The announcement did not include changes on the settlement (ILR) qualifying period (which we are told will rise from 5 to 10 years), but it did list the following changes to be implemented by end of this year:

- Raising the immigration skills charge by 32% for sponsors.
- Uplifting English language requirements across the immigration system, which suggests the change would not be limited to just the Skilled Worker route (and dependant family members).
- New rules for family routes.

Employers that use the UK’s sponsorship system should look out for further detail on these changes to help them support affected employees and candidates, particularly those who were hoping to be sponsored in roles below RQF Level 6. Our Business Immigration team is holding a webinar on 3 July on the Immigration White Paper proposals and other recent changes and will cover these developments. You can register if you wish to hear more.

If you need support or have any questions relating to UK business immigration matters, please contact your usual Business Immigration team member or Annabel Mace, partner and head of UK immigration.

## Contacts

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