

**MINUTES OF THE 68th MEETING OF THE MIGRATION ADVISORY
COMMITTEE ON 24 OCTOBER 2014**

Chair: Professor Sir David Metcalf CBE

**Attending: Dr Martin Ruhs
Dr Jennifer Smith
Professor Jonathan Wadsworth
Professor Jackline Wahba
John Thompson (Home Office)
MAC Secretariat**

Apologies: Lesley Giles

Agenda item 1 - Welcome and introductions

1. Apologies were received from Lesley Giles. David Metcalf welcomed Anna Lacey to her first MAC meeting. Anna has succeeded Vanna Aldin as an economic adviser in the MAC secretariat. Aashya Patel had also left the MAC secretariat and David Metcalf paid tribute to her contribution to the work of the MAC.

Agenda item 2 – Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2014

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Agenda item 3 – HO, MAC secretariat and Committee member oral update

3. Tim Harrison gave the update on behalf of the MAC secretariat. He provided details of upcoming staff changes within the secretariat. A new economist had joined the team (Anna Lacey) taking over from Vanna Aldin and another economic adviser would be joining in December. Two new assistant economists would be joining over the next couple of weeks. Another team member is due to return from maternity leave at the end of December
4. To help build capability of the new analysts joining the MAC secretariat, the aim is to provide some bespoke econometrics training, possibly with the help of MAC members. Tim also said that the MAC Annual Report for 2013-14 was due to be published soon.
5. From the MAC members, Tim Harrison and Jonathan Wadsworth gave feedback on a conference on highly skilled migration they attended in Washington at which there was considerable interest shown in the MAC's work. Other MAC members reported interest being expressed in other countries in relation to the MAC's work. Jonathan mentioned an Economic and Social Research Council doctoral programme as a possible source of temporary recruits to aid the secretariat. It was

pointed out that the Home Office already has ESRC placements for 6 months while the placements under the scheme Jonathan cited were for longer.

6. John Thompson provided the update on behalf of the Home Office. He explained the changes that had been made to the Tier 1 (Investor) route including raising the investment threshold and allowing new investment instruments. He also outlined other issues in relation to the other Points Based System routes that the department was considering.

Agenda item 4 - Oral update on MAC appointment process

7. David Metcalf updated the MAC on the appointment process for a new MAC member to replace Martin Ruhs. A number of candidates had been interviewed and the names of appointable candidates had been forwarded to Home Office Ministers, who may wish to see the candidates themselves before approving a final appointment.

Agenda item 5 - Oral update on MAC work programme

8. Tim Harrison explained that the MAC was still awaiting confirmation of its work programme for 2014-15. Although potential areas of work had been identified, the Home Office had yet to commission the MAC to commence work on any of these. The MAC's framework document agreed with the Home Office provides that the MAC's annual work programme should be set out by the department. This had not as yet been forthcoming.
9. It was noted that this also impacts on the roll out of the MAC's research programme, which is heavily dependant on the themes identified through the work programme. The MAC will soon need to commission research during the remainder of the current financial year.
10. MAC members expressed their concern about the continued delay in receiving confirmation of the work programme. John Thompson explained that the workplan was being chased up and the Committee asked that he expedite this.
11. MAC members also requested that arrangements be put in place to ensure a timely delivery of the MAC's work plan in future. Tim Harrison agreed to pursue this with the Home Office.

Agenda item 6 - Paper 68.2: MAC update on the partial review of shortage occupation list

12. Stephen Earl introduced this paper which outlined a programme of upcoming meetings with, and visits to, corporate partners from the sectors covered by the shortage commission. Committee members were encouraged to attend meetings where possible.

Agenda item 7 - Paper 68.1: Update on econometric work

13. The secretariat was following up on the comments received from peer reviewers on the three econometric papers examining the impacts of migration on the labour market. . MAC members provided further comments and suggestions on each of the papers, including the need to update the analysis following the recent ONS revisions to the Labour Force Survey data. Incorporating these changes would mean that the papers would only be completed in early 2015.

Agenda item 8 – Any other business

14. The date of the next meeting of the MAC is Friday 5 December 2014. The Committee also agreed to meet on the following dates:

Friday 23 January 2015
Friday 27 February 2015
Friday 27 March 2015

13. David Metcalf paid tribute to Martin Ruhs on behalf of the Committee for Martin's efforts over the previous 7 years of the MAC's existence. His international knowledge had made a big difference to the MAC's worldwide reputation. He had made very constructive contributions to MAC reports and had been very supportive of the Chair of the MAC.

**MAC secretariat
November 2014**